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PENELOPE:
OR,
LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

RECEIVED

TO THE EDITOR

DEAR SIR

I have the honor

to acknowledge the receipt

of

your letter

of the 10th inst.

in relation to the

above

P E N E L O P E :

OR,

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

I.

L O N D O N :

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PENELOPE:

OR,

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

CHAPTER I.

Six days out of seven, and nine hours out of twenty-four, the reverend and learned Dr Gregory Greendale sat surrounded with open volumes, and immersed in profound thoughts, which ever and anon he committed to writing. For twenty years had this been his regular practice, and to this dull monotony of being nothing could have reconciled him but a strong sense of duty, seasoned with a little spice of theological ambition.

But his ambition was not for worldly honour or for filthy lucre. His aspirings were not after mitres, stalls, and deaneries, nor was his anticipated recompense compounded, in his mind, of pounds, shillings, and pence. Far purer and sublimer motives prompted his diligence and filled his hopes. It was his ambition to occupy a distinguished station among the defenders of the faith, and to be hereafter celebrated in the records of ecclesiastical history as the most irrefragable polemic that ever wrote or reasoned. It was his opinion, that the church established by law was the best and purest in Christendom; and that if its tenets were fully and clearly stated, accompanied with such refutation of sectarian errors as he in his wisdom and logic could furnish, all sects would be converted, and all heresies expire for ever.

In this most laudable pursuit the doctor was not altogether free from obstacles, disappointments, and interruptions. Frequently when he

thought that he had only to sail quietly and smoothly into harbour, a fresh breeze of controversy sprung up, driving him out again into the unfathomable ocean. Oftentimes when, after a long, tedious, and multifarious series of references and quotations, he fancied that his argument had been completed, and the key-stone of his logic immoveably fixed, he found that some very unaccountable oversight, some trifling neglect, let the whole fabric sink down in confusion. And very, very many times, was the thread of his argument snapped asunder by the intrusion of the bustling, active, clever, managing, contriving, economical Mrs Greendale. With one of these interruptions our history commences.

As the study door opened, the doctor laid down his pen, pushed up his spectacles and lifted up his eyes, and Mrs Greendale entered courteously, and gracefully smiling and saying—

“My dear, I don’t wish to interrupt you, but—”

To which unfinished apologetic introduction the worthy doctor in a more rapid manner, and with greater asperity of tone than became a learned divine and an affectionate husband, replied—

“ You *have* interrupted me, Mrs Greendale.”

“ There now, my dear, you are always so impatient, you will never let me speak.”

Mrs Greendale was wrong ; the doctor was not always so impatient. But Mrs Greendale was one of that countless myriad of persons who, in their intense feeling of the present, too hastily draw general inferences from particular facts.

“ Well, well,” said the doctor, “ what is it, my dear, that you wish to say to me ?”

This was spoken in a more conciliating tone ; for the worthy polemic knew that the more gently and quietly such interruptions were received, the more likely they were soon to terminate. And Mrs Greendale having now permission to speak, was accordingly well pleased.

“Why, my dear, I was wishing to consult you and to ask your advice on a subject of which you must be a far better judge than I am.”

This was certainly a concession on the part of Mrs Greendale; but unfortunately the concession was not so highly estimated by the receiver as the giver; and that is often the case with concessions of this kind. The doctor was silent, waiting for Mrs Greendale's own enunciation of her own story; for he well knew that impatient questionings rather retard than accelerate the progress of a narrative. Mrs Greendale then proceeded.

“I have been thinking a great deal about Penelope. Now, you know, we have of late heard very little of her father, and there really does not seem to be any prospect that he will ever fulfil the fine promises he has made. And we are not doing justice to the poor girl by bringing her up with expectations that are not likely to be realised; we are giving her an education which is only justifiable under the idea

that she should apply that education to the purpose of supporting herself."

"Certainly, Mrs Greendale, it is with that view, you know, that we have given her the kind of instruction of which you speak."

"Yes, I know it is, but—but—"

"But what, my dear?"

"Why I was going to say, that though it may be very proper that Penelope should have these accomplishments, yet it may not be altogether right that she should be introduced into the society of persons of rank, on terms of equality and intimacy."

"Persons of rank, my dear—what do you mean? What persons of rank are we likely to introduce her to? Surely we are not in the way of doing her any injury in this respect."

"I don't know that, my dear; for you know that we are to have a party to-morrow evening, and Miss Spoonbill and Colonel Crop have consented to come."

The doctor did not laugh aloud; nor did he

visibly smile at this last speech of his active, bustling, managing partner. And it would have been indeed excusable had the reverend divine at least relaxed his features into a smile, at the dexterity with which Mrs Greendale converted the above-named lady and gentleman into persons of rank. As these names have been mentioned, it is proper that our readers should know something of the parties.

Honoraria Letitia Spoonbill was a maiden lady of some forty, fifty, sixty, or seventy years old ; but in whose cranium the organ of number was so slightly developed, that she could not say which of the above numbers came nearest to the truth. In person not fascinating, in manners not commanding, in wealth not abounding, in temper not prepossessing, in understanding not profound ; but in pride and vanity almost more than superabounding. Her rank not the deepest herald could ascertain, but it was very true that for many years she had been accustomed to claim kindred with the lord of Smatterton Castle,

always speaking of and addressing the Earl of Smatterton as her cousin.

Colonel Crop was only Colonel Crop; he enjoyed the rank of colonel, and that was all the rank that he could boast; he was tolerated at the castle; he dined occasionally with his lordship; and occasionally partook of the pleasure of shooting the birds which were cultivated on his lordship's estate. In town, he patronised the Countess's routs, and in the country he was a companion for the Earl, when not otherwise engaged. He was proud of the Earl's acquaintance, though he was not weak enough to suppose that he was more than tolerated. The haughtiest of the great do sometimes pick up such acquaintances as Colonel Crop, and they cannot easily get rid of them. At the village of Smatterton, of which Dr Greendale was rector, Colonel Crop was only known as the intimate friend of my lord; but the doctor knowing the humble rank which the colonel held in his lordship's estimation, was amused at the gravity with which Mrs Green-

dale spoke of this gentleman and Miss Spoonbill, as persons of rank, and as too magnificent for the society of Penelope Primrose. With a slightly ironical expression he therefore said—

“I quite agree with you, Mrs Greendale, that it would not be very desirable to have our niece intimate with such persons of rank as Miss Spoonbill and Colonel Crop.”

“Well, I am glad you think as I do, my dear ; but how shall we manage about the party to-morrow? How can we best get rid of Penelope? For really I cannot help observing that, notwithstanding her dependent situation, she begins to assume the airs of a lady.”

Mrs Greendale was going on with all the fluency of which she was capable, and that was no trifle, to recommend the exclusion of the young lady from the impending party which threatened on the morrow to grace the rectory-house of the village of Smatterton ; but suddenly the loudness of her tones abated, and the words came slower, and her countenance looked blank

with an expression of interrogation ; for, as she was speaking, the worthy rector drew himself up to full sitting length, opened his eyes unusually wide, compressed his lips unusually close, and placing his hands in the arms of his chair, before his spouse had ceased speaking, he exclaimed—

“ My good woman, what are you talking about ? ”

“ Mrs Greendale certainly thought herself a very good woman, but she did not like to be so called. She was therefore somewhat confounded, and she replied with an expression of confusion—

“ But, my dear, did not you say yourself that you did not wish your niece to be introduced to persons of such high rank as Miss Spoonbill and Colonel Crop ? ”

Speaking more slowly, and in a tone of expostulation, the good man replied—

“ I did say, Mrs Greendale, that I had no wish to introduce my niece to an intimacy with such persons of rank as Miss Spoonbill and Colonel Crop. It is not to their rank I object,

but I am of opinion that from such an intimacy Penelope would not derive any benefit, nor add to her respectability ; I look upon her as above them, and not upon them as above her.”

Mrs Greendale was angry ; and surely it was enough to provoke a saint to hear such disrespectful language applied to those persons of whose acquaintance the worthy lady was especially and peculiarly proud. Bridling up therefore, and assuming in her turn a high tone, she replied—

“ Well, my dear, if you think it beneath your niece’s dignity to meet such persons, you had perhaps better send word to say that you do not wish to have their company : I dare say they will not require much persuasion to stay away.”

“ I wish, my dear, you would not talk such nonsense. Penelope will not become very intimate with these people of rank by meeting them in a party. Have your party quietly, and let the poor girl enjoy it, if she can ; it will be time enough for her to feel the bitterness of servitude

when she is actually in that condition ; while she is under my roof she shall be treated as if she were my own."

There was in this last speech a tone of authority and decision to which Mrs Greendale was in the habit of submitting without an audible murmur or expostulation. She therefore left the doctor's apartment, merely muttering to herself, " I don't think you would indulge a child of your own as you indulge this pert conceited creature. I am very glad she is no niece of mine."

The doctor returned to his studies, and Mrs Greendale to her domestic occupations. The doctor soon forgot what was past, losing himself amidst the perplexities and intricacies of theological discussions and doctrinal controversies. But Mrs Greendale brooded over the obstinacy of her spouse, and the pride of her niece, and the mortifications of her own pride. She could not imagine what her husband could mean by speaking so disrespectfully of persons of such high consideration as Miss Spoonbill and Colonel

Crop. Ever since the high-born spinster had taken up her residence at Smatterton, for the sake of living near to her cousin the Earl, Mrs Greendale had been paying homage to her for the purpose of obtaining her illustrious notice and patronage. It was a concern of the utmost moment to have the honour of Miss Spoonbill's company at the rectory; for the wife of the rector of Smatterton was very jealous of the superior glory of the wife of the rector of Neverden, whose parties were graced by the presence of the great man of the parish, Sir George Aimwell, Bart. Mrs Darnley, the lady alluded to, was not indeed quite so much gratified by the distinction as Mrs Greendale was mortified by it. Now it was some pleasure to the latter that the great man in her husband's parish was an Earl, whereas the great man in Mr Darnley's parish was only a commoner; for Mrs Greendale always caused it to be understood, that baronet was not a title of nobility. Still, however, it was a mortification that the Earl would not condescend to visit at the

rectory. But when Miss Spoonbill and Colonel Crop had accepted an invitation to Mrs Greendale's party, it was a matter of high exultation to her; it was therefore not very agreeable to her to hear these distinguished personages spoken of so slightly by her reverend spouse. But Dr Greendale was an odd sort of man, that everybody allowed; and he used to say the strangest things imaginable. Being so studious a man, was quite enough to account for his oddities.

It may be proper now to give some account of Miss Penelope Primrose, and to state how she was brought into a state of dependence upon her uncle, Dr Greendale. This young lady was an only child of Mr Primrose, who had married a sister of the rector of Smatterton. When he married he was possessed of a very decent independent fortune, which though not ample enough to introduce him to the highest walk of fashion, was quite sufficient to introduce him to the notice of some part of the fashionable world, and

to bring him acquainted with several gentlemen of the strictest honor ; or to say the least, gentlemen who made great talk about their honor. With the acquaintance with these gentlemen he was exceedingly flattered, and with their truly elegant manners he was highly pleased. As some of them bore titles, their condescension was so much the greater, in not only tolerating, but even in almost seeking his acquaintance ; and he found that there did not exist in the higher ranks so much of that pride of birth and family as some of his earlier friends had often talked about. For as Mr Primrose was the son of a merchant, some of his city intimates, and his father's old companions, had represented to him that if he should assume the character of a man of fashion, he would only be ridiculed and despised by the higher ranks. He found, however, that these censorious citizens were quite in an error ; instead of experiencing contempt and neglect, he found that his society was actually courted ; he was a frequent guest at splendid

entertainments, and his own invitations were not refused. He observed, that although Mrs Primrose was a beautiful and accomplished woman, it was not so much on her account as his own that he was so much noticed. The parties to which he was most frequently invited, were gentlemen's dinner parties ; and it was very likely that his company was agreeable, for he had great powers of conversation, and was a man of ready wit. It was very pleasant to have his good sayings applauded by men of fashion and of honor, and he thought that the exquisitely courteous and graceful demeanour of the higher ranks was the very perfection of human excellence. In the course of five years, or rather less, he found that his style of living was rather too expensive for his means, and upon looking into his affairs he also discovered that he was in possession of nothing that he could call his own, but that when his debts should be paid, his coffers must be emptied and his house unfurnished. He was quite astonished at the discovery, and for awhile

dreaded to communicate the painful intelligence to his wife ; but she had foreseen it, and the anticipation had affected her deeply and irretrievably ; she sunk under the pressure, and left Mr Primrose a widower with an only child. By this calamity he was roused to recollection, and he called to mind that he had occasionally played at cards with some of his honorable friends, and that he must certainly have been a greater loser than he had imagined at the time. He had at one sitting won upwards of three thousand pounds, and he never afterwards sat down to the table without being reminded of his good luck ; but it so happened, that when he went into an examination of his affairs, he found that his many smaller losses had more, much more, than counterbalanced his once great winnings. Now was the time for reflection, and so his friends thought, and they left him to reflection. The result was, that he committed the motherless and portionless Penelope to the care of his brother-

in-law, Dr Greendale, and betook himself to commercial diligence in a foreign country, with the hope of at least providing for himself, if not of retrieving his losses.

Fourteen years had Penelope spent under the roof of the worthy and benevolent rector of Smatterton. To her uncle she had ever looked up as to a father. Of her own father she knew but little; and in all the thoughts she entertained concerning him, there was mingled a feeling of pity. It was highly creditable to Dr Greendale, that his manner of speaking of Mr Primrose should have produced this impression on his daughter's mind. There certainly was in the conduct of Penelope's father enough of the blameable to justify the doctor in declaiming against him as a profligate and thoughtless man, who had brought ruin upon himself and family. But censoriousness was not by any means the doctor's forte. He was rather a moral physician than a moral quack, and he had found

in his own parish that the gentleness of fatherly admonition was more effectual than the indignant eloquence of angry rebuke.

Penelope naturally possessed high and buoyant spirits; and had her situation been any other than that of dependence, it is probable that this vivacity might have degenerated into pertness. It was however softened, though not subdued by the thought of her father in voluntary exile, and the language in which Dr Greendale was accustomed to speak of his "poor brother Primrose." Her spirit also was humbled, though not broken, by the stepmother-like behaviour of Mrs Greendale. Penelope could never do or say anything to please her aunt. When she was cheerful, she was reprov'd for her pertness; when serious, she was rebuked for being sulky. At her books, she was proud of her learning; at her pianoforte, she was puffed up with useless accomplishments. Out of the kitchen she was too proud for domestic occupation, in it her assistance was not wanted. In her dishabille she

was slovenly, when dressed she was a fine lady. By long experience she grew accustomed to this studied annoyance, and it ceased to have a very powerful effect upon her mind; and it might perhaps be the means of doing her good, though its intention was anything but kindness.

As the mind and feelings of Penelope Primrose were impelled in different directions by her natural constitution, and by her accidental situation, a greater degree of interest was thus attached to her character. There is in our nature a feeling, from whatever source arising, which loves not monotony, but delights in contrast. The tear which is always flowing moves not our sympathy so strongly as that which struggles through a smile; and the sun never shines so sweetly as when it gleams through the drops of an April shower.

To introduce a female character without some description of person, is almost unprecedented, though it might not be injudicious; seeing that

then the imagination of the reader might fill the vacant niche with whatever outward, visible form might be best calculated to rouse his attention, to fix his sympathies, and to please his recollections. But we are not of sufficient authority to make precedents. Let it be explicitly said, that Penelope Primrose exceeded the middle stature, that her dark blue eyes were shaded by a deep and graceful fringe, that her complexion was somewhat too pale for beauty, but that its paleness was not perceptible as a defect whenever a smile illumined her countenance, and developed the dimples that lurked in her cheek and underlip. Her features were regular, her gait exceedingly graceful, and her voice musical in the highest degree. Seldom, indeed, would she indulge in the pleasure of vocal music, but when she did, as was sometimes the case to please the Countess of Smatterton, her ladyship, who was a most excellent judge, used invariably to pronounce Miss Primrose as the finest and purest

singer that she had ever heard. More than once indeed the Countess had recommended Penelope to adopt the musical profession as a sure and ready means of acquiring independence ; but the young lady had scruples, and so had her uncle.

CHAPTER II.

It has been said in the preceding chapter, that Dr Greendale resumed his studies as soon as Mrs Greendale left his apartment, and that he soon forgot the interruption and the discussion which it had occasioned. After a little while however he found that the train of his thoughts had been seriously broken, and that he could not very easily or conveniently resume and connect it. He therefore determined that he would for a few hours lay aside his pen, and indulge himself with a little relaxation from study. These occasional relaxations are very essential to authors, especially to those whose writings are the result of deep and continuous argumentative thought.

The doctor indeed had found this to be the case to a much greater extent than he had anticipated : for, when he first busied himself upon his great work, he thought that three years would be the very utmost of the time which he should occupy in the labours of the pen. But it so happened that he spent so very large a portion of those three years in the pleasing employment of looking to the honor and glory which lay beyond them, that they were absolutely gone before he was well aware of it, and his important and momentous labours were only begun ; he had scarcely laid the foundation of that magnificent superstructure, which was destined to be an immortal and unfading monument of his theological and polemic glory. And even long after the expiration of the first three years, he found it necessary to rouse himself to extraordinary, and almost convulsive diligence by preaching some very eloquent discourses on procrastination. In these discourses he quoted Young's Night Thoughts ; and most of his parishioners thought the quota-

tions exceedingly fine; but Mr Kipperson, of whom more hereafter, quite sneered at them, and afterwards told the Earl of Smatterton's game-keeper, that Young was nothing of a poet compared to Lord Byron. But, notwithstanding all that the worthy rector of Smatterton had said, thought, or preached, concerning procrastination, he could not help now and then indulging himself and laying aside his pen, just for an hour or two; it could not make much difference; and besides it would not do to be always writing; there must be some interval allowed for thought. In one of these intervals, now accounted for by the interruption of Mrs Greendale, he sent for his niece Penelope; for he thought that in Mrs Greendale's present humour the young lady would feel herself more at ease in any other company than that of her diligent and managing aunt.

Well it was indeed, for the dependent one, that this humour of relaxation seized the doctor at this moment: for Penelope had met Mrs Greendale on her return from the doctor's study, and

had, in as considerately gentle, and humble terms as possible, proffered her assistance in making preparation for the morrow's party; and Mrs Greendale, instead of receiving the offered aid courteously, as it was proposed, only replied :

“ I beg, Miss Primrose, that I may not take you away from your studies. Besides, it is not quite correct that guests should provide for their own entertainment.”

Much more to this purpose said the angry wife of the rector of Smatterton, and Penelope bore it as patiently as she could. From this discussion however she was soon and most agreeably relieved by a message from the doctor, commanding, or more properly speaking, requesting her attendance in the study.

Hastily but not rudely she quitted the paragon of domestic managers to attend to the best of uncles, and the keenest of polemics. When she entered the doctor's room, she found the books closed, and the pen laid down, and the chair moved, and the fire stirred, and a chair cleared of

its literary lumber and put on the opposite side of the fire-place for her to sit down upon. These were pleasant symptoms, and pleasanter than all were the kind and amiable looks of her uncle.

“Penelope, my dear, if you are not very much engaged I should like to have a little conversation with you. But, perhaps, you are helping your aunt to prepare for tomorrow?”

“No, sir, I am not, for my aunt does not want any help. I was offering my assistance when you sent for me, but my aunt declines it.”

“Indeed!—Well then sit down, my dear, sit down. Have you been practising this morning? I have not heard you. You must learn that new song before you go to the castle, for it is a great favourite with Lady Smatterton.”

“I have practised this morning, and I sang it over two or three times after breakfast. I think I know it now quite perfectly.”

“That’s a good girl. But I cannot say I wish you to make a business of singing. It is

always very well for an amusement but no farther. The Countess is very kind to you, and you ought to oblige her as much as possible; yet I would not wish that you should give your exclusive attention to that science."

"I have no such wish myself, sir; I feel very much embarrassed and confused even when I sing at the castle, when no one is present but Lord and Lady Smatterton. I am sure I could never bring myself to perform in public."

"Very good; you have a very proper feeling on the subject. I know the Countess would be very happy to bring you out under her patronage, and very respectable patronage it would be; but I have very great objections to such publicity for a young person like you."

"But, my dear uncle, I have been thinking—I have been thinking—"

Penelope, in thus speaking, hesitated and blushed, and trembled, and a tear would have been seen starting into her eye, but the doctor

observing that she was confused, did not look at her to increase her confusion. Suspecting what was the cause of this embarrassment, he said :

“ Yes, yes, my dear, I know what you have been thinking about, and I have been thinking of the same subject. You think it very strange that you have not heard from Robert Darnley.”

The doctor was right, and the doctor was wrong. Penelope had indeed been so thinking, but it was not of these thoughts that she was then about to speak. The suspicion however increased her confusion and she wept. Sobbing, she exclaimed with great earnestness :

“ Oh no, my dear uncle ! I had no such meaning, but I was going—”

The doctor heeded not these words, but proceeded to say, with much tenderness of manner :

“ But, my dear Penelope, you should not make yourself uneasy. Foreign letters are frequently delayed and detained from a variety of causes. I dare say you will soon have a sufficient explanation of this silence. I have often had

your father's letters two or even three together, after waiting a long while, and fearing that the correspondence had ceased."

Penelope recovered her voice and more composedly replied; "Indeed, sir, it was not of Robert Darnley that I was going to speak; I was about to say that it was now time for me to go out into the world and no longer to be burdensome to you."

"Burdensome to me, my dear child, how can you think of such a thing?"

"But, sir, it is painful to be in a state of dependence when one has the means of doing something for a maintenance. I am sure, my dear uncle, you would not mention the subject to me, and so I am compelled to speak first."

"A state of dependence is a state in which we all are. We must be dependent on one another, it is the ordering of a wise Providence; it is the means by which we have the development and exercise of some of our best and purest feelings. Beside, you are yet too young to teach others, you have

not finished your own education, you want experience. Pray do not talk of leaving me. If you say any more on this subject I shall be afraid your home is irksome."

This was the most effectual appeal that could be made to Penelope; it silenced, but convinced her not. It is true that her home was irksome. It was annoying to her in spite of all her constitutional vivacity and acquired philosophy to be continually exposed to the open or covert reproaches of Mrs Greendale. For this very clever lady had exercised management in everything but in the government of her own temper. And true it is, though strange it may appear, that her own opinion of her own temper and habit of mind was exactly the converse of reality; so when we see our image reflected by a looking-glass, that which is our right hand appears as our left, and that which is our left appears as our right. Mrs Greendale thought herself a model of candour and good humour; and whenever she uttered reproaches against Penelope, which was not very

seldom, she actually thought and believed that all the fault was in the young woman's perverseness, vanity, or affectation, whereas the only fault was in her own distempered vision, which could see nothing good in her, against whom, for some unaccountable cause, she possessed a decided prejudice. For a mind thus constituted, there was obviously no remedy; Mrs Greendale could not profit by indirect hints, nor could she see in others of the same temperament a portraiture of herself. It was also in vain that Penelope attempted to please her; that was an absolute impossibility, and the dependent one had found it so by long and bitter experience. The poor girl therefore was not of opinion that she was burdensome to Dr Greendale, but she felt that Mrs Greendale was burdensome to her; she found that her elasticity of spirit was diminishing; she began to assume the air and aspect of one tried with far deeper troubles than the continual wearisomeness of undeserved reproaches. Though occasionally Dr Greendale had perceived something

of this, and though he had given some gentle hints to that purpose to his better half, yet he had no idea of the extent to which the annoyance reached, and of the bitter pains of heart and spirit which it occasioned to his niece. The art of ingeniously tormenting was once made the subject of a lively little book, but the art is not to be learned; it comes as the spontaneous growth of the mind, and Mrs Greendale knew the art much better than the witty author of that treatise.

We have explained the situation in which Penelope was placed. But as every condition of humanity is more or less of a mixed nature, so in her state there were some alleviations. Her kind-hearted and benevolent uncle, so considerate and so gentle in his manner towards her, partly counterbalanced the pain which she experienced from the behaviour of her aunt. He was constantly endeavouring to encourage her with hopes that her situation was not destined to be for ever a state of dependence. He was perpetually dwelling upon the brightest view of her

father's prospects ; and though Mr Primrose had now been fourteen years in India, and during that time had sent to England very little more than promises and flattering hopes, yet the worthy doctor was pertinacious in cleaving to the conviction, that his brother-in-law would eventually, and perhaps very soon, fulfil his promises, and realize the hopes which he had excited. As for himself, the uncle of Penelope would willingly have adopted her as his own, but this adoption would have been serviceable only during his natural life ; for he had scarcely anything to call his own beyond the income of his living.

In the situation of Penelope there was also another circumstance, which might be said to be an alleviation ; but which, in some of its bearings, was a source of deep anxiety. Robert Darnley, the son of the rector of Neverden, had very early in life, by means of strong interest, been appointed to a situation of great promise in India ; and two years before the time of which we are writing had made a visit to England ; during this visit

an acquaintance had been formed between him and Miss Primrose, and this acquaintance was not met by any opposition on the part of the young gentleman's parents. Mrs Greendale could not imagine what Mr and Mrs Darnley could see in Penelope to make them so partial to her, and she thought that a young man of such talents and prospects might make a far better match than with a young woman whose only portion was her pride, and a few useless accomplishments ; for in this point of view did she regard her niece, or, to speak according to her own most frequent manner of expression, Dr Greendale's niece. Mrs Greendale, to be sure, did not oppose the match, but she could not help giving a few hints as to the unreasonableness of the expectation that Penelope should consider the rectory as her home till she should be married. For, as the good lady well observed, there is no accounting for these young sparks, they may change their minds a thousand times ; and then in such case what would the young woman be fit for, after living in

expectation of becoming a fine lady, and at last being compelled to earn her own living? It may be imagined, and it might be described, how unceasingly eloquent was Mrs Greendale on these topics; and it may also be imagined that no great delicacy would be used as to the manner in which such precautionary reflections and admonitions were administered by the prudent and knowing wife of the book-loving rector of Smatterton. And as the worthy doctor gave himself up so closely to his studies, his dear wife took it for granted that he must be a mere ignoramus as to all worldly matters, and therefore she endeavoured to supply the deficiencies of his knowledge by the redundancy of her own.

Pleasing then as it might be to Penelope Primrose to look forward to competence and independence with one for whom she entertained a reverence as well as an affection, yet, in spite of her confidence in the mental stability and good sense of her destined husband, it was impossible not to be in some degree affected by the perpetual

and unceasing repetition of hints and insinuations concerning human fickleness and juvenile inconstancy; more especially when these hints and insinuations were somewhat corroborated by the fact, that latterly the epistolary communications had diminished in frequency.

From these circumstances it may be then easily inferred, that Penelope was not in an enviable situation, and that nothing could have supported her spirits but that exceedingly strong propensity to bright hopes which is the characteristic of the youthful mind, and about which moralists, and essay-writers, and other wiseacres, make such a prodigious and prosy preachment. Mr Malthus himself could not desire a more effectual mean of thinning the denseness of population, than causing every mind, if it were possible, to form such a view of future days as should be actually realized by the event. But it never will be so, and it never can be so; Providence is wiser and kinder than moralists and essay-writers; and Providence has given to the young that brightness of hope, the pleasures of which are far

greater than the pains of disappointment. The very disappointments of maturer life bring with them some pleasurable alleviation, in the eloquence and pathos with which we sigh and lament over the deceitfulness of the world's promises; and thus there is a double good derived from a single evil. For youth is pleased as it looks forward to manhood, and manhood is soothed and instructed as it looks backward to youth.

We do not like to finish a chapter with a sentimentality clap-trap, therefore we turn from our digression to inform the reader, that the interview between Dr Greendale and his niece terminated in reconciling the latter to a longer residence under her uncle's roof, and in convincing her that the non-arrival of letters from India would be very satisfactorily accounted for; so that Penelope looked forward to the party engaged for the next day with a degree of pleasure, and a portion of hope that Mr or Mrs Darnley would explain the long silence of their son.

CHAPTER III.

“A PARTY in a parlour,” to quote an expression from the author of *Peter Bell*, is to a clever, active, and managing woman, a very serious and important matter. If then on the morning of that day which was destined for the reception and entertainment of Colonel Crop and Miss Spoonbill, Mrs Greendale should be extraordinarily full of business, and in proportionable ill-humour, it were not to be wondered at. This was very naturally anticipated by Penelope, who endeavoured as well as possible to provide against it. As soon therefore as breakfast was over she put on as cheerful a look as she could well assume, and asked Mrs Greendale to give her

leave to assist in preparing for the evening entertainment; and to her very great astonishment, instead of meeting with a rebuff, she was answered with great civility, and her offer was accepted; and even her opinion was asked concerning divers ornamental arrangements of the supper table. The cause of this phenomenon it is our duty to explain.

Our readers then are to be informed, that on the preceding day, almost immediately after the interview and dialogue between Mrs Greendale and the doctor concerning Penelope, the angry lady of the rectory went to call on Miss Spoonbill, in order to make assurance doubly sure, as concerned the longed-for visit. At this lady's house, Mrs Greendale had the pleasure of seeing Lord Spoonbill; and as his lordship was a very affable young man, he condescended to take great notice of Mrs Greendale, and to ask particularly after the doctor and his niece. In the course of conversation Mrs Greendale cleverly contrived to let the young lord know that there was to be a

party at the rectory the following day, and that Miss Spoonbill and Colonel Crop had kindly condescended to honor the humble roof of Dr Greendale by their presence; at the same time she also ventured to express how much they would be honored and how highly gratified if his lordship should not happen to be better engaged, and would favor them with the pleasure of his company. To her inexpressibly agreeable surprise, his lordship unhesitatingly accepted the invitation. "Now a fig for Mrs Darnley," thought Mrs Greendale; "I shall have a lord for my guest." This it was that put Mrs Greendale in such good humour. Penelope soon received from her aunt the information which we have communicated to our readers, and with that communication she also had a request from the good-humoured and managing mistress of the rectory, that she would see that the pianoforte was in tune, and that her music-books were in order, because his lordship was excessively partial to music. It was absolutely impossible for Penelope not to comply

with this courteous request, and she promised that the music should be all in proper order, though she knew that she should be under the disagreeable necessity of performing some stupid duets, in order to give his lordship an opportunity of displaying his own little knowledge of music.

Lord Spoonbill was the only son and heir of the Earl of Smatterton. At the time of which we are writing, this promising youth had just finished his education at the university of Cambridge, or more properly speaking at the joint universities of Cambridge and Newmarket; for the latter is a kind of essential appendix, or chapel of ease, to the former. It is indeed a great piece of neglect, and grievously impeaching the wisdom of our ancestors, that Cambridge only of the two universities is blessed by the vicinity of a race-course; seeing that our hereditary legislators are in many cases more fond of applying the knowledge which they acquire at Newmarket, than that which they gain, if it be any at all, at the univer-

sity of Cambridge: and if there be any truth in the observation, that the best kind of education is that which is applicable to the purposes and pursuits of after-life, then indeed Newmarket may be called the better half of Cambridge. Lord Spoonbill was not one of those careless young men who lose at the university what they have gained at school; one reason was, that he had little or nothing to lose; nor was his lordship one of those foolish people who go to a university and study hard to acquire languages which they never use, and sciences which they never apply in after-life. His lordship had sense enough to conclude that, as the nobility do not talk Greek, he had no occasion to learn it; and as hereditary legislators have nothing to do with the exact sciences, it would be a piece of idle impertinence in him to study mathematics. But his lordship had heard that hereditary legislators did occasionally indulge in other pursuits, and for those pursuits he took especial care to qualify himself. In his lordship's cranium, the organ of

exclusiveness was strongly developed. We do not mean that his head was so constructed internally, as to exclude all useful furniture, but that he had a strong sense of the grandeur of nobility and the inseparable dignity which attaches itself to the privileged orders. The only instances in which he condescended to persons in inferior rank, were when he was engaged at the race-course at Newmarket, or when he found that condescension might enable him to fleece some play-loving plebeian, or when affairs of gallantry were concerned. In these matters no one could be more condescending than Lord Spoonbill. We should leave but an imperfect impression on the minds of our readers if we should omit to speak of his lordship's outward and visible form. This was an essential part of himself which he never neglected or forgot; and it should not be neglected or forgotten by his historian. He was tall and slender, his face was long, pale and thin, his forehead was narrow, his eyes large and dull, his nose aquiline, his mouth wide, his teeth beau-

tifully white and well formed, and displayed far more liberally than many exhibitions in the metropolis which are only 'open from ten till dusk.' His lips were thin, but his whiskers were tremendously thick. Of his person he was naturally and justly proud. Who ever possessed such a person and was not proud of it?

Now when this superb and elegant specimen of nobility condescended to patronize Mrs Greendale's party, was it not enough to account for the exquisitely high spirits in which the good lady appeared, and for the unparalleled courtesy with which she accepted the offer of her niece to assist in preparation for the evening's entertainment? Penelope herself was very much pleased; for though she had often endeavoured to persuade herself that she did not heed Mrs Greendale's ill-humours, yet she could not help feeling the difference between good-humour and moroseness. It is not pleasant to be always within hearing even of the snarling of a dog, or the creaking of a rusty hinge, and far less pleasant is the language and

tone of human censoriousness. The young lady was not only pleased with her aunt, but she also regarded Lord Spoonbill with some degree of approbation. Of his lordship indeed, she knew but little, save that when she passed him he used to stare at her with great rudeness and earnestness. That was not agreeable ; but, for aught her simplicity knew to the contrary, such behaviour might be the mark of that superiority of mind which so exclusively belongs to persons of rank.

Penelope was also in good spirits at the thought of meeting Mr and Mrs Darnley, from whom it was possible that she might hear something of Robert Darnley ; for though she had frequently said to herself, “ I am sure he has forgotten me,” yet she did not believe herself when she said so. Most highly proper and suitable was that feeling ; for it was possible that the neglect was only apparent and not real ; in such case, therefore, common candour required the most favorable view of the matter. It should be stated, that Smatterton and Neverden were adjoining villages, both of them at

some distance from the high road, and Neverden was in the line between Smatterton and the nearest post town. The letters were carried by a great lubberly boy, called Nick Muggins, who rode upon a little half-starved weazel-faced animal, that might pass for a horse, ass, or mule; but the poor animal was so grievously insignificant, that the inhabitants of Neverden and Smatterton did not even take the trouble to decide to what species it belonged. But let that pass. Now Nick Muggins was not one of the best readers in the world; he had unfortunately left school before he came to that part of his education. There is many a man of letters who does not know how to read. In consequence of this defect, Nick was forced to call in the aid of the more learned, and it was not unfrequently the case that when he asked Mr Darnley, saying; "Please sir, what's the 'rection of this here?" that if the letter was for Penelope, Mr Darnley would take it of the boy and carry it to Smatterton in the course of the day, and especially when no letter came for

himself from the same quarter, as he was anxious to hear from his son by every opportunity. In hopes therefore that Mr Darnley would make himself doubly welcome at Smatterton, Penelope kept up her spirits. So the day passed over very brightly and calmly; and before the shadows of evening had descended, Mrs Greendale's party began to assemble.

No newspaper announced to the world Mrs Greendale's rout, nor did the hospitality of the rectory disturb the neighbourhood by the rattle of carriages, the glaring of torches, the thundering of knockers, or the impatient vociferations of coachmen and footmen. Of the party, we have already mentioned Miss Spoonbill, Colonel Crop, and Lord Spoonbill. Mention has also been made of Mr and Mrs Darnley; but nothing further has been mentioned than their names. As it is desirable to know one's company, it may not be unsuitable in this place to introduce to our readers more particularly and descriptively Mr and Mrs Darnley and family.

The Rev. Robert Darnley was rector of Neverden, having enjoyed the living about five and twenty years at the time of which we are writing. He was a most zealous churchman, and was thought by some persons of more lax and complying principles to be rather a bigot. In his manners there was no lack of courtesy, though to a casual observer he might seem rather proud and haughty. He certainly did entertain a very high sense of the dignity and importance of the clerical office; and even those who censured his stately manners bore willing testimony to the activity and zeal with which he discharged his clerical duties; and the more creditable to him was this testimony, inasmuch as he never appeared in the character of a preferment-hunter. He almost entirely confined his labours to his own parish, and though the living was small and his own property was ample, he was as attentive as if his subsistence depended on his parish. Some of his friends used to say that his professional income was altogether expended in charity. He

was a man therefore of much influence in his neighbourhood, and indeed it was often remarked that he seemed to be a greater man than Sir George Aimwell himself; and in truth, if moral dignity has anything to do with greatness, he certainly was.

Mrs Darnley was the best-tempered woman in the world; not very remarkable for anything else than for her good-humour, which was imperturbable and imperishable, and for the remains of great personal beauty, or rather prettiness. Their family consisted of one son, of whom we have already spoken, and of three daughters, who were educated by Mr Darnley himself, and therefore were more distinguished by the depth of their learning than the extent of their accomplishments. Happy was it for them, and happy for their father, that they possessed minds capable of doing justice to a literary education. They were not pedants nor prigs. To Penelope Primrose they were invaluable friends, and one or other of them was an almost unceasing com-

panion to her. The name of the eldest was Anne; of the second, Mary; and of the third, Martha. Mary was most distinguished for talent, Martha for imagination, and Anne for good humour and practical good sense. If there were any difference in the degree in which the young ladies were devoted to literary pursuits, perhaps the eldest was the least zealous. It does indeed not unfrequently happen, that increasing years abate the fervour of literary pursuits, from shewing us the vanity of mental labour, and teaching us how little we can learn, and how limited must be our knowledge even in its utmost possible range. We do not, however, design to insinuate that Miss Darnley was far advanced in years, or that her knowledge had reached, or even closely approached, the practical limits of mortal acquirement. We are merely making the best apology we can for the young lady's but moderate thirst for literary distinction.

There was one however of Mrs Greendale's party against whom no charge of indifference

to literature or science could be justly brought. It was Peter Kipperson, Esq. This gentleman, though in middle life, had not abated aught of his zeal for learning. He was a man of very great intellectual ambition. His views were not confined to any one branch of literature, or directed exclusively to any one science. As an agriculturist he certainly took the lead in his county; and being, as it was currently reported, "a capital scholar," he was the composer or compiler of all resolutions and petitions touching the interest of corn-growers. His opinion was asked, and his expressions quoted as authority on all matters connected with land, or stock, or grain. If any ingenious mechanic had constructed or invented any new machine, the invention was worth nothing till it had the sanction and patronage of Mr Kipperson. But he was not a mere farmer: he was also a man of letters. He had one of the largest libraries in the neighbourhood; besides which he was a subscriber to a public library in the metropolis, from whence he had all the new

publications as soon as they came out. He had read far more than Mr Darnley or Dr Greendale : the former of whom he called a high priest, and the latter a mere pedant. On the great men of the two villages, Lord Smatterton of Smatterton, and Sir George Aimwell of Neverden, he looked down with great contempt as very ignorant men ; and though Lord Spoonbill had been at Cambridge, Mr Kipperson was quite sure, from the obsolete constitution of the universities, that nothing could be taught there that was worth knowing. He therefore thought Lord Spoonbill a very superficial and ignorant man. To the pursuits of literature Peter Kipperson added a profound love of science. The plain farmers, when they called upon this genius, were astonished at the very knowing aspect which his library wore ; seeing, that besides the numerous volumes of elegantly bound books, which were ranged on shelves surmounted with busts of Milton, Shakspeare, Cicero, &c. &c., there were globes, maps, electrical machines, telescopes, air-pumps, casts of

skulls, chemical apparatus, and countless models of machines of every description, from steam-engines down to mole-traps. The glories of Peter are yet untold. Wearied as our readers may be with the monotony of panegyric, they must, if they continue to be our readers, undergo yet more, and be told, that Mr Kipperson was a great judge of music. He could play on the flute and on the pianoforte; but he thought nothing of his performance compared with his judgment. He had once at the opera witnessed the performance of Don Giovanni, and from that moment became a critic. Furthermore, Peter was a perfect gentleman, and, to crown all, a man of patriotic principles;—though it has been whispered that his politics were conveniently adapted to those of the Earl of Smatterton and Sir George Aimwell. It does sometimes happen, as some of our readers may know, that in some parts of Great Britain the little gentry copy the politics of the great gentry or nobility of their neighbourhood. Mr Kipperson, with all those amiable and estimable qualities, was a

single man. He consoled himself, however, with the reflection that Lord Bacon and Sir Isaac Newton were unmarried.

The above-named, with divers others, formed Mrs Greendale's party ; and when they were assembled, the worthy lady found herself perplexed and puzzled by the grandeur of her guests. There were three persons present to whom she would fain have given, if it were possible, her undivided attention. Lord Spoonbill was one of the three. His lordship, however, did not seem disposed to draw very liberally on the attention of the lady of the house ; for, as soon as he entered the rectory drawing-room, he lounged up to Mrs Greendale, whom he honored with a nod, turned round to the Doctor, whom he recognised with a smile, said to the Colonel, " How do ye do, Crop ? " and then threw himself almost at full length upon a sofa, as if those to whom he had addressed himself were vanished, and as if there were no one else in the room. By degrees, however, he condescended to recognise one, or two,

or more of the party. Of Mr Kipperson he asked the price of wheat, and Mr Kipperson asked what his lordship thought of Mozart's opera of Don Giovanni. His lordship admired it prodigiously, but he condescended to say very little on the subject; whether it was that he had but little to say, or whether he thought that such an universal genius as Mr Kipperson could not receive any new light from a Cambridge man. The great agriculturist, finding that his lordship was not eloquent on the subject of music, assailed him again on the subject of Don Juan, as versified by Lord Byron, and his lordship being rather weary of the company and questions of Mr Kipperson, stared him full in the face, and with an affected smile, said :

“ 'Pon honour, Mr—Mr—I—I am not a reading man.”

Mr Kipperson thought his lordship somewhat rude, and perhaps might have been disposed to challenge him, only he feared that he might be disappointed, and hear his lordship exclaim,

“ ’Pon honour, Mr—Mr—I—I am not a fighting man.”

Lest by any perverseness of apprehension the interrogator of his lordship might be induced to proceed in his unwelcome familiarities of approach, the heir of Smatterton rose from the sofa and took his station at the pianoforte, where Miss Primrose had been with much persuasion vainly endeavouring to place Miss Martha Darnley. Now Lord Spoonbill did not like to hear Miss Martha Darnley so well as he liked to hear Miss Primrose ; and the three reasons which determined him are such as for their soundness must approve themselves to all our readers. In the first place, the politics of Mr Darnley were opposed to the politics of Smatterton castle ; in the second place, Miss Martha Darnley was not so pretty as Miss Primrose ; and in the third place, Miss Primrose was by far the best performer of the two.

It was a great relief therefore to his lordship that Miss Primrose was absolutely compelled to take her place at the instrument, and it was a

great pleasure to him to see that when the leaves of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* were turned over there was a pause when the young lady came to the duet of "*La ci darem.*"

"That is a beautiful duet, Miss Primrose," said his lordship.

"Will your Lordship take a part in it?" replied Miss Primrose.

"With the greatest pleasure," responded his lordship: and as his lordship was speaking, Mr Kipperson approached the musical group, and was about to repeat his well-known commentary on Mozart's music, when, at the instigation of Lord Spoonbill, the music began. He only made two or three blunders through the piece, and Miss Primrose very mercifully concealed them when she could, and accounted for them when she could not conceal them.

In like manner his lordship went through several other duets, as historians speak of battles being fought, "with various success." In like

manner his lordship kept Miss Primrose engaged at the instrument nearly the whole of the evening : so that no one else could enjoy the use of the pianoforte, or be favoured with the company of Miss Primrose, or the charms of his lordship's conversation. But Mrs Darnley, after long and anxiously watching an opportunity to speak to Penelope, came near to the instrument, and whispered loud enough to be overheard by Lord Spoonbill, " We understand that the Warley is arrived off Portsmouth, and we shall no doubt have letters tomorrow or next day."

It was rude in Mrs Darnley to interrupt the musical people, and it was condescending in Penelope not to be rudely inattentive, especially as she was listening also to compliments from a lord. But Penelope Primrose was one of those high-spirited young ladies who think nothing of titles. She was thankful for the information which Mrs Darnley communicated to her ; but while she felt thankful for the matter she was somewhat troubled by the manner of the information. There

was an expression in Lord Spoonbill's countenance which signified that he not only heard but understood the nature of the communication which was thus made. Very true, it was nothing to his lordship, but still it was not pleasant to Penelope to have this information conveyed to her in the hearing of a third person. She therefore blushed most burningly.

Now Lord Spoonbill was quite as capable of behaving politely as of behaving rudely ; and he never did either the one or the other without abundant reason and motive. It was not at this moment part of his system to behave rudely. Very kindly therefore he took no notice of the blushes of the young lady, and very naturally he spoke about Mrs Darnley and the rector of Neverden. He spoke of them in such terms of recommendation as were not best calculated to recommend them. This is an ingenious artifice too well known to require explanation, and too villanous to justify us in saying a single word that should contribute to render the practice more

facile. The language had an effect on Penelope, of which she was scarcely aware. She had a feeling of undefined and unaccountable uneasiness, and the very intelligence which Mrs Darnley had communicated did not give her that unmingled pleasure which she had anticipated. The evening passed off not so pleasantly as the day had done.

While Miss Primrose was engaged at the pianoforte, Mrs Greendale was endeavouring with all her powers to entertain Miss Spoonbill. In these endeavours the poor lady laboured with more zeal than judgment. It is a common, but very foolish, practice for little folks to assume greatness, in order to recommend themselves to the great. It never answers, nor is it likely that it should. For what is the use and benefit of rank if it be not to separate and distinguish the superfine part of the species from the general mass of mankind? And whence arises the pleasure of this distinction but from its rarity. Who would care to be a duke amidst a whole nation

of dukes, or who feels himself honoured by the title of esquire? Instead therefore of listening with complacency to the harangues of Mrs Greendale, and the talk of her own or her husband's alliance to nobility, Miss Spoonbill most perversely directed her conversation to the prospects of Penelope Primrose.

“Your niece has a most delightful voice, Mrs Greendale; I think it a great pity that she does not take the advice of my cousin, the Countess, and make use of her musical talents. She would come out under very great patronage.”

“Perhaps so, madam,” replied Mrs Greendale rather hastily: “but as Miss Primrose is the doctor's relative, and not mine, I do not presume to interfere with my advice as to the disposal of the young lady. Indeed I do not know that there will be any absolute necessity for her having recourse to any occupation.”

“I understand you, Mrs Greendale; but let me advise you as a friend not to suffer any foolish expectations of that nature to prevent the young

woman from making use of her talents for her own maintenance. Young women are dependent enough at best. It would be better for them rather to increase than to diminish the means of making themselves independent. It is not wise in young women to depend on the speculation of marrying, for thus many poor things are forced into marriages which are productive of anything but happiness. My cousin, the late Earl of Smatterton, and his most excellent Countess, used always to give it as their advice to young people, not to speculate on the chance of marriage; and the present Countess is of the same opinion."

Miss Spoonbill thereupon launched out more fully and freely into divers discussions concerning portionless females, and administered much advice, more valuable than welcome, to Mrs Greendale. We will put it to any of our readers whether they would be greatly pleased, if, after taking pains to procure the visiting countenance of a person of high rank, the said personage, instead of visiting on terms of equality, should

presume to play the part of a dictator? Mrs Greendale was therefore disappointed, and that most grievously.

Much more conversation than we have recorded passed at the rector of Smatterton's evening party, but we do not think it necessary to give more to the world. For if by any accident such conversation should find its way into a library for the people, it is possible that the people would not thereby be very greatly edified, nor add much to the reverence which they feel for the clerical order and profession.

CHAPTER IV.

THE party at the rectory was not kept up to such a late hour as to prevent Lord Spoonbill and Colonel Crop from riding over to Neverden the next morning to take a day's shooting with Sir George Aimwell, whom we shall have great pleasure in introducing to our readers.

Sir George Aimwell, of Neverden Hall, Bart. was descended from a long line of illustrious ancestry, and was a wholesale poulterer, and one of the great unpaid. Not that we mean by this expression to insinuate that the retail poulterers did not pay him for what they had : we merely mean to say, that the preserve-worshipping, spring-gun-setting, poacher-committing baronet admi-

nistered justice for nothing ; and, with reverence be it spoken, that was quite as much as it was worth. Perhaps we may do our country a piece of service that shall immortalize us, if we suggest by the way a great improvement on the present system of justice-mongering. Let not Mr Hume imagine that we are going to recommend that the country justices of the peace should be paid for their valuable time and invaluable labours. A far better plan would be, that they should pay for their places, and that the magistracy should be given to the highest bidder. For surely it is worth something to have authority, to be able to accommodate or annoy a neighbour, to commit a poacher, and to keep a whole village in awe. It is worth something also to be called "your worship." This however is a digression. Not that we apologize for it, but rather take to ourselves praise for communicating so much valuable information in so pleasant a style.

To proceed then with our description of Sir George Aimwell. The worthy baronet was a

most active magistrate, peculiarly acute in matters of summary conviction; and thinking it a great pity that any rogue should escape, or that any accused, but honest man, should lose an opportunity of clearing his character by means of a jury of his fellow countrymen, he never failed to commit all that were brought before him. There was also modesty in this; for he thereby insinuated that he would not take upon himself to make a decision in these cases, but would leave the determination to the judges of assize and the wisdom of a jury. Sir George professed Whig politics; these were hereditary in his family, but by no means constitutional in him as an individual. Therefore he passed for a very moderate Whig; for one who would not clog the wheels of government. In short, he was no more a Whig than a game preserver ought to be; and that, as our readers know, is not much. He took especial pains to keep the parish clear of vagrants and paupers; and by his great activity he kept down the poor-rates to a very moderate sum. The ex-

cessive zeal and satisfaction with which he exercised the magisterial functions led us to the recommendation which we have given above. Sir George, though a professed Whig, was not very partial to the education of the lower orders, and he always expressed himself well pleased when he met with a country booby who could neither read nor write. For this reason Nick Muggins, the post-boy, was a great favourite with him. Our worthy baronet could not see the use of reading, and he thought it a great piece of affectation for country gentlemen to have libraries. His own books, for he had a few, were huddled together in a light closet, where he kept his guns and sporting tackle. There was a Lady Aimwell, wife to Sir George; but this lady was a piece of still life, of whom the neighbours knew nothing, and for whom her husband cared nothing.

Colonel Crop was quite at home with Sir George Aimwell, and so he could be with any one who kept a good table. Shooting was not any

great pleasure to the colonel, but as he could not sleep all day long, and as the dinner hour did not hurry itself to accommodate him, he was content to walk about the fields with a gun, and say alternately yes or no to the various wise remarks made by Lord Spoonbill or Sir George Aimwell. Let no one despise Colonel Crop for this most useful of all social qualities, a decided and settled acquiescence in all that his feeders may please to assert. The colonel belonged to a profession the glory of which is to obey orders. If therefore he carried this spirit into all his intercourse with those whom he considered his superiors, it is neither to be wondered at nor to be blamed. We do not wish to speak disrespectfully of the army; it is very useful in war and very ornamental in peace.

The morning's sport was not good, and therefore the worthy baronet was sulky and ill-humoured, and kicked his dogs; and he made use of such language as is very unfashionable to

print. Colonel Crop re-echoed the unprintable exclamations of the great unpaid, but Lord Spoonbill did not seem to heed the sport, or more properly speaking the want of sport. It is very provoking to be in a passion with anything that thwarts our humour, and it is still more provoking to find another, who ought to be in a passion with the same object, regard the matter with total indifference and unconcern. Thus provoked was the worthy and exemplary magistrate Sir George Aimwell. His red face grew redder, and his magisterial looks became more majestic; at length, with a due degree of deference to one of noble rank, he began to utter something like reproach or expostulation to Lord Spoonbill.

“ Upon my word, Spoonbill, this may be very good sport for you, but it is not so for me. I never saw the birds so shy or the dogs so stupid. But you seem to be very easy about the matter.” Then turning to the colonel, he continued: “ I suppose his lordship is thinking of old Green-

dale's pretty niece."—At this speech the baronet laughed, and so did the colonel. Who could help laughing at it?

Lord Spoonbill smiled, and only replied in an affected drawl, "By all that is good, Sir George, you must think me a great simpleton to be caught by a pretty face. The fact is, I am not much of a sportsman, you know. I could enjoy a *battue* very well, but this hunting about for a few stray birds is poor work."

"A *battue*, forsooth!" exclaimed the amiable baronet:—"I believe those villains the poachers have scarcely left a single bird in the Cop-wood."

The worthy magistrate was going on, but his indignation at the shocking violation of those most excellent laws which the wisdom of our ancestors has formed, and the folly of their descendants has tolerated, so entirely overcame his feelings, that in the violence of his anger he incurred the penalty of five shillings; but his companions did not inform against him. In a word, he swore most bitterly and tremendously. Our readers

must not blame him too hastily for this transgression. Let them consider that he was a magistrate, and of course very zealous for the due observance of the laws. Swearing is certainly wrong; but that is a mere trifle compared to poaching: the uttering of a single profane oath being, in the eye of our most excellent laws, precisely one-twentieth part of the crime of an unqualified person having in his possession a dead partridge.

When the baronet had relieved his bursting heart, and vented his swelling indignation in the mode above named, and when Colonel Crop had sympathetically joined him in the execration of the transgressors of our most excellent and equal laws which regard the arrangement of game, then did Sir George proceed :

“ Could you believe it, Spoonbill ?—You know the pains I have taken with that wood—I say, could you believe it, after all the expense I have been at about it—after having six men sitting up night after night to watch it, that in one after-

noon, and that in broad daylight, it should be almost cleared by those infernal villains ?”

Here the baronet became angry again, and no wonder ; it was beyond all endurance. Not only did he as a magistrate feel grieved at the violation of the laws, but as a gentleman and a man he was pained at the loss of those birds which he seemed born to shoot. The birds were gone and the poachers were gone ; the first he could not shoot, and the last he could not commit. And what is the use of living in the country, if there are no birds to be shot and no poachers to be sent to gaol ?

Pitying the sorrows of the magistrate, Colonel Crop replied, “ Too bad, ’pon my honor.”

But Lord Spoonbill having recently quitted the university, in which he had been taught to investigate and seek out the connection of cause and effect, enquired :—

“ But how could the rascals do all this without being detected, if you had men to keep the wood by night and day ?”

“ I will tell you,” said the baronet, whose violence seemed a little abated by the kind sympathy of his friends : “ it was entirely owing to a rascally gamekeeper of mine, who, no longer ago than last Sunday week, instead of attending to his duty, must needs go sneaking to church. I saw the fellow there myself. He absolutely had the impudence to come into church when he knew I was there. I dismissed him however at a short notice. I was determined to have no church-going gamekeepers.”

“ That going to church was abominable,” said the colonel.

“ But I thought you had always guns in your plantations, Sir George ?” said Lord Spoonbill.

“ So I have,” replied the magistrate ; “ but unfortunately the guns had been discharged in the morning on some boys and girls who had gone to look for nuts ; and as one of the boys was nearly killed, the under keeper took it into his fool’s head that he would not charge the guns again ; so I gave him his discharge.”

“ You have been very unfortunate in your servants, Sir George.” So spake the colonel, who was more than usually eloquent and voluble ; and Sir George was especially delighted with him, for he seemed to enter so fully into all the magistrate’s feelings upon the subject of game and poaching.

It is astonishing that, notwithstanding all the pains which the legislature has taken upon the subject of the game laws, which are so essential to national prosperity and the Protestant succession, still there is a possibility that gentlemen may be deprived of their sport by the intervention of a poacher. The laws are too lenient by half ; and till it is made felony without benefit of clergy to be suspected of poaching, we shall never be free from this dreadful calamity. Our legislators have done a great deal, certainly ; but they ought to take up the subject with as much zeal as if the cause were their own.

Now while Colonel Crop was sympathising with Sir George Aimwell on his great and serious calamity, Lord Spoonbill was gradually with-

drawing himself from his companions, and moving towards the side of the field which lay nearest to the road, and looking with great earnestness in the direction of the village of Neverden. It was not long before his eye caught the object for which he had been looking. There came clumsily cantering towards him a quadruped, the appearance of which would have puzzled Buffon, and on its back there sat a biped as unclassable as the beast on which he rode. The two were usually called Nick Muggins and his pony. Lord Spoonbill took great pains to see Nick by accident.

“Have you any letters for the castle, Muggins?” said the heir of Smatterton.

“Isser,” replied Muggins, and forthwith he produced two letters, one of which was addressed to the Right Honorable the Earl of Smatterton, and the other to the Right Honorable Lord Spoonbill.

“I will take charge of them,” said his lordship.

To which proposal Nick Muggins made no objection. His lordship then, just by way of condescendingly noticing the humble post-boy, said—

“ There now, I have saved you the trouble of riding any farther, unless you have any letters for the parsonage ?”

“ Here is one, sir, for the young lady as lives at Parson Grindle’s.”

Muggins looked rather significantly at Lord Spoonbill when he thus spoke, and his lordship replied—

“ You may give that to me, and I will take care of it.”

What arguments were used to induce this breach of trust in the guardian of the Smatterton post-bag, is not stated, nor known, but conjectured. Muggins, when he had given the letter to his lordship, looked rather hesitatingly, and as if he wished to speak ; his lordship interpreted his looks, and said, “ Well, what are you waiting for ?”

To this interrogation Muggins replied with a cunning simper, "Why, please, sir, my lord, on case of any questions being axed, perhaps your lordship, sir, will just-like get a poor boy off, you know, my lord."

"Bah!" replied his lordship, "leave that to me." And thereupon those arguments were used which had been of such great and decided efficacy in previous cases of the same nature. The undescribable rider of the undescribable beast then turned about and went homewards, and the heir of Smatterton soon rejoined his sporting companions.

Lord Spoonbill was now in possession of two letters more than did of right belong to him; and though he had taken great pains to become possessed of at least one of them, and though he was glad that he could prevent the information which they contained from reaching the destined point, still he was not altogether comfortable. Once or twice he determined that the letter designed for the parsonage of Smatterton should

reach its destination, and then he as often changed his mind again. It may seem strange, and perhaps be thought not true, that an hereditary legislator should descend to such meanness as to intercept a letter. It is indeed strange, and but for its strangeness it would not be here recorded. But Lord Spoonbill was one of those decided characters that do not let trifles deter them from pursuing their schemes. He was rather proud of the dexterity and address with which he pursued any object on which he had fixed his mind, and he mistook, as many other prigs do, obstinacy for firmness. He had fully made up his mind to a certain end, and he was not choice as to the means. Yet he was a man of honor, a man of the nicest honor, a man of the most sensitive and susceptible honor. If any one had been capable of calling him mean, if any one so bold as to have expressed the slightest idea that his lordship was a contemptible fellow, with what indignation would he have heard and repelled the suspicion. His notions of honor

must have been very curious and quite unique. We wish it were in our power to present to our readers an analysis of those views which Lord Spoonbill took of the principles of honor. We are not equal to a task so truly philosophical: we can only say that his lordship did descend to the meanness of intercepting a letter, and did call and think himself a man of honor. If any of our readers think that this is very paradoxical and altogether improbable, we congratulate them on their ignorance.

We cannot help at this part of our narrative shifting the scene for a little moment, just enough to shew our readers the effect produced in another quarter by the conduct of the above-named man of honor. From the sportsmen at Neverden we turn to the rectory of Smatterton and its inhabitants. Dr Greendale was in his study as usual, not kept away by any weariness of the preceding evening. Mrs Greendale felt more acutely the trouble of company departed than of company coming, and Mrs Greendale was not

selfish in her sorrows, but communicated them to all about her. Penelope Primrose felt the full weight of her aunt's troubles; and as the good lady of the rectory had been rather disappointed the preceding evening she was not in one of her best humours. Patiently as possible did Penelope bear with those ill humours, for her mind was buoyed up with hopes of pleasing intelligence from abroad. The hour arrived which usually brought the postman, but no postman arrived. It was possible the clocks at Smatterton were too fast. The hour was gone by, a full hour was past. It was not probable that the Smatterton clocks were an hour too fast. There was a little hope that Mr Darnley might be at Smatterton in the course of the morning; but the morning passed away and Mr Darnley did not come. But a messenger came from the rectory of Neverden with enquiries after Dr and Mrs Greendale. Penelope asked very particularly after the rector of Neverden and Mrs Darnley, and hoped that they arrived safely home, and

that they had taken no cold, and—and—just as a matter of curiosity, had they heard from their son lately? The answer was, that a letter from Mr Robert Darnley had arrived the very hour before the messenger set out. Penelope turned pale, and then blushed most intemperately, because she felt how pale she looked; and then she thought—“Now I know he has forgotten me.” Immediately after however she thought again, and then it occurred to her that, as Robert Darnley was remarkable for his great filial affection, it was possible that he might have had no time to write by that conveyance more than one letter. But she still could not help thinking that he might have sent her one small letter: if it had been but short, it might have been a memorial of his thoughts still dwelling upon her. She felt hurt, but would not be angry; and hoped, very earnestly hoped, that she was not cherishing a foolish and fond passion for one who had relinquished all fondness for her. It was very strange and altogether unaccountable. It was so very

much unlike the usual frankness and openness of mind for which Robert Darnley was so remarkable. These were painful thoughts, and the more painful because so very perplexing. It is somewhat wearying to exert the mind very diligently and perseveringly, even in solving problems and guessing riddles which are mere abstractions; but when, in addition to the perplexity, there is personal and deep interest and moral feeling, then the agitation and weariness of the mind is at the highest.

Penelope found her accustomed resource in trouble, and her consolation under life's perplexities, in the kind and paternal attention of her uncle. She spent the greatest part of the afternoon of that day in Dr Greendale's study, and listened with great pleasure to the fatherly exhortations of that most excellent man; and, as she was afterwards heard to observe, she thought that he spoke more like an angel than a man. She treasured up in her heart the hope that the morrow would bring tidings from the beloved one.

CHAPTER V.

SIR George Aimwell and his companions found but little sport in the field, and it was not unpleasant to Colonel Crop to hear that it was now high time to leave the birds and to adjourn to dinner. This was a relief also to the baronet himself; for though he was a keen sportsman he never suffered the amusements of the field to interfere with the duties of the dinner table. Colonel Crop was aware of this laudable peculiarity in the manners of Sir George of Neverden, and therefore enjoyed a day's sport with him far more than he would have done with another.

Those of our readers who know the worthy baronet need not be informed of the superior

style of his culinary arrangements. It was very well for him that his table had this attraction, for it is very certain it had no other. His own conversation was by no means the most brilliant. Lady Aimwell might indeed be capable of conversing, but the guests of Sir George never heard her voice, excepting so far as it was absolutely necessary that some words must be uttered by the lady who presides at the head of a table.

Speaking of the intellectual accomplishments of the magistrate of Neverden, we may not be considered as making a needless digression if we narrate an anecdote, or rather expression, a critical expression, of the worthy baronet. Mr Peter Kipperson, the wise and knowing agriculturist of Smatterton, one day dined at the table of Sir George of Neverden hall. Now Peter was a very literary man, who thought there was nothing worth living for but science and literature; and having somewhere read that it was impossible to take shelter in a shower of rain with such a man as Burke, without discovering him to be a man of

genius, Peter was desirous of continually showing off, and was instant in season and out of season. Therefore when sitting at the table of the worthy baronet, he assailed the magistrate with various scientific subjects, but all to no purpose; there was no response from his worthy host. Endeavouring to adapt himself to the moderate talents and circumscribed reading of the baronet, he next started the subject of novels and novel reading, taking care to insinuate that, though Sir George might not read the trash of circulating libraries, he might be acquainted with some of our best novels. To this at last the baronet replied—

“Oh, yes; I remember many years ago reading a novel called *Tom Jones*, written by a Bow-street officer. I recollect something about it—it was very low stuff—I forget the particulars, but it was written in the manner of servants.”

Hereupon Mr Peter Kipperson set it down as an indisputable fact that baronets and magistrates were the most ignorant creatures on the face of the earth, and he congratulated himself

that neither he nor Sir Isaac Newton were baronets:

Our readers may therefore very well imagine that if we pass over in silence the dinner at Neverden hall, where sat Sir George and Lady Aimwell, and Colonel Crop, and my Lord Spoonbill, we are not transgressing the truth of history. Soon after the cloth was removed, Lady Aimwell made herself invisible, and Sir George made himself what he called comfortable.

“Now, my good friends,” said he, “you know my way. Pray take care of yourselves. Pass the bottle. There—now—well—you know—I—sometimes—it is very rude—you—I know you will—excuse”—

Saying, or muttering as above, the guardian of laws and game sank to sleep in his easy chair, and left Lord Spoonbill and Colonel Crop to amuse each other. They were however very bad company, for one had no good in his head, and the other had nothing at all there.

Lord Spoonbill smiled at the baronet in his

easy chair, and Colonel Crop smiled also. Colonel Crop looked at his lordship most imploringly, as if to beg that he would say something to which yes or no might be replied ; but the heir of Smatterton was more deeply engaged in his own thoughts. Colonel Crop filled his glass and emptied it, and cracked nuts, and picked his teeth, and took snuff, and yawned, and looked at the pictures, and looked at his own fingers, and put them into the finger glass, and took them out and wiped them. Lord Spoonbill filled his glass, and did not empty it, and did not look at the pictures, and he took out his watch and put it into his pocket without looking at it. Of many events it is said, that they are no sooner said than done. But all these movements took up a much longer time in doing than they have in the reporting. It was a great relief to the colonel that Lord Spoonbill looked at his watch, for that enabled the man-of-war to say, "What time is it?"

Lord Spoonbill answered by guess, and the

colonel was not very particular. When about half an hour more had elapsed, the heir of Smatterton rang to order his horse, and he said to the colonel, "Crop, I shall leave you to play at backgammon with Sir George. Make my apologies. I have some matters to attend to at the castle."

Lord Spoonbill then took his departure from Neverden hall. It was a fine moonlight night, and the road from Neverden to Smatterton was peculiarly well calculated for the enjoyment of a moonlight ride. The domain of Neverden was for the most part on low and level ground; and the road from the hall towards Smatterton lay partly by the side of the park, over the low fence of which a person on horseback might have a most beautiful view of plantation scenery, and a distant glimpse of lofty and swelling hills, dark with abundant foliage, but softened by indistinctness and remoteness. The ground then gradually rose, and on the left hand might be seen at no great distance a broad and gracefully undulating

river, far indeed from the sea, but bearing on its bosom the sails of commerce and the barks of pleasure. And there ran rippling by the side of the road a little prattling infant streamlet, bounding along its bright pebbly channel as in haste to reach the calmer and more majestic expanse of waters. On the right hand a dense and dark plantation of firs skirted an abruptly rising ground, at the end of which the road brought the traveller by a sudden turn to an immediate and full view of the massive and whitened towers of Smatterton castle. The castle rose, as some writers would say, but stood, we think, is the most proper, majestically towering above all surrounding objects, and enjoying from its lofty turrets a view of four counties; what these counties were we will not say,—we dislike personalities.

Now as Lord Spoonbill rode along under the bright light of the moon, undisturbed by any earthly sound but the tinkling of the sheep-bell, or the barking of some cottage curs, he did seem

to himself to enjoy the beauty of the scenery and the pleasant balm of the autumnal air. And as a feeling of scenic beauty penetrated his soul, there entered also with that a thought of moral beauty, and he felt that his mind did not harmonize with the repose and beauty which surrounded him. The feeling was not strong enough to be called remorse, it was not serious enough to border upon repentance. He felt conscious that he had acted with meanness, that he had been guilty of a piece of cruelty. He had used a most contemptible and debasing artifice to produce alienation between too worthy and excellent young persons, loving and beloved, confiding and hoping amidst their doubts and difficulties. These feelings were unpleasant, and he endeavoured to soothe himself by sophistry. After all, what injury had he done to Robert Darnley? It would be a pity that so fine a woman as Penelope Primrose should be sacrificed to such a dull, plodding, commonplace man as the younger Darnley. Commonplace men are not worthy of the notice of men of

fashion, nor deserving of the ordinary privileges of humanity. His lordship had some recollection of Mr Darnley as being a very poor creature, and he thought that it was not probable that he should have gained any great degree of improvement by commercial pursuits and habits of business; for, as everybody knows, these things tend very much to degrade and to cramp the mind; while on the other hand those pursuits in which his lordship had been engaged had quite the contrary effect. It must be very ennobling to the mind to be engaged in gambling, horse-racing, lounging, bird-shooting, fox-hunting, and seduction; and any woman of sense and spirit must infinitely prefer a protector of this description, to a common-place man who knows nothing of the world. As to Penelope then, his lordship very naturally concluded that he was designing her an essential service. Poor, simple, artless creature, she knew nothing of society, all her days had been passed in a sequestered village; and as Robert Darnley was almost the only person

she was acquainted with, at all likely to make her an offer, she fancied that she must of necessity be in love with him. Lord Spoonbill had not according to his own account been much of a reader, but he had read the Sorrows of Werter, and he had read many other compositions of that nature; and he invariably found that the lovers of the betrothed and the married were men of genius, fine feeling, elegant manners, and every species of sentimentality; and he observed that they were induced to the very laudable practice of seducing the affections of young women from their husbands or lovers, by a mere principle of compassion. It was a pity that so much sense and sensibility should be so ill met, and then how kind and considerate for some high-minded young gentleman, like my Lord Spoonbill, to save them from the stupidity of a common-place husband, and consign them to infamy and a broken heart. Nothing of course can be a greater manifestation and proof of sensibility, or fine feeling, than seducing engaged affec-

and, if Lord Spoonbill had written his own history, we should have heard of as much sympathy being expressed for him as there has been for Werter and such like coxcombs; but as we do not suffer his lordship to speak for himself, our readers must be content to contemplate his character in all the baldness of truth.

While thoughts as above described were occupying the mind of his lordship, he drew nearer to the domain of Smatterton, and as the view of the castle and village opened upon him, he saw more lights in the cottages than usual at that time in the evening, and he heard at a little distance sounds of more than ordinary movements. And presently there came galloping towards him a servant from the castle. Thinking that it was a messenger sent for himself, he stopped the man to ask what was the matter. The man drew up his horse just for a moment, and in hurried accents replied that Dr Greendale had been taken very ill, and that the Earl had given orders serious over to M—— to fetch his lordship's own

de

physician. Waiting for no further interrogations the messenger rode off as fast as before.

Will it be believed that at this moment one of the first and promptest thoughts that occurred to Lord Spoonbill was the idea, that should this illness terminate fatally, the event might facilitate his designs upon Penelope? Yet so it was. This was his first and strongest feeling. He had forgotten all the fatherly kindness of that good man. He was insensible to any impression from the numberless acts and words of friendship received from the pious and holy rector. Dr Green-dale had been for many years an intimate friend of the family at the castle. The Earl, though a haughty man and of very strong aristocratic feelings, had never regarded the worthy rector with any other feeling than friendship and respect; and the Countess, though not insensible to the charms and fascinations of fashionable life, yet delighted in the moral repose and the sober beauties of the pastor's character. The Earl and Countess did not condescend to visit at the

rectory, but the doors of the castle were most cheerfully open for the doctor, and there was sincerity in their language, when the noble inhabitants of the mansion declared that a more welcome guest never crossed their threshold. There must have been something good and pre-eminently good in the character of a man who could thus as it were command the moral homage of minds in the highest walks of society. The doctor was not a man of fortune or of family. His respectability was altogether personal and individual. This good man had taken very especial notice of the heir of Smatterton, and had endeavoured, according to the best of his ability, to impress upon the mind of the young lord those principles which, in after-life, might become a blessing to him; and when he could not but observe with all his natural disposition to candour and charity, that there were bad principles at work within, he endeavoured to hope for the best, and in his pastoral admonitions to the youth he did not assume the sternness of the

ensor, but adopted the gentle insinuating language of a friend to a friend. He was grieved, indeed, when he saw that Lord Spoonbill was likely to become a frivolous character, but he was spared the bitter mortification of knowing that he was decidedly profligate.

Miserably degraded must have been the mind of Lord Spoonbill when intelligence of the good man's illness reached him, that he could think only, or chiefly, of the vicious benefit likely to accrue from the fatal termination of that illness. There was indeed another thought in his lordship's mind. He could not but notice the hurry in which the messenger seemed to be, and he was also struck with the obvious sensation which the illness of the rector had created in the village. And this thought was more powerfully impressed as he rode past a few cottages near the park-gate. He there heard the comments and commendations of the humblest of the humble, and the poorest of the poor. He heard the aged tremulously uttering their lamentations ;

these lamentations were perhaps rather selfish, but still they were such as did honour to him for whom they were expressed, if not to those by whom they were used. Then his lordship thought within himself of the power and efficacy of moral worth; and he himself began to be almost sorry; but his more degrading and vicious thoughts had the ascendancy; and he was fully resolved not to be moved or melted by the sorrows of ignorant rustics.

He rode up to the castle, and having dismounted he proceeded immediately to the magnificent saloon, in which the Earl was so fond of sitting even when alone. As Lord Spoonbill entered the apartment, the Earl raised his eyes from a book which he was reading, and said, "You are soon returned, Spoonbill; did you find Sir George's company not very inviting? Or, have you left Crop to enjoy the sole benefit of the worthy baronet's wit and humour?"

"I left the baronet taking his nap after dinner, and desired Crop to stay and amuse him with

his backgammon when he should wake. My visits at Neverden, you know, are never long."

The Earl was about to resume his book, when Lord Spoonbill added, "But pray, sir, what is this account I hear from one of your people about Dr Greendale? I hope the old gentleman is not seriously ill."

By this interrogation the Earl seemed to be roused to a recollection of what might otherwise have passed away from his mind. Laying down his book, he said :

"Oh!—ay—right: I am very sorry to tell you that the poor man is very ill. That is, so I understand—I sent immediately for my physician, and I also said that, if it were necessary, I myself would go down to the rectory and see the good man. He will be a very great loss to the village. The poor people are very much attached to him, and I believe he is very conscientiously attentive to his duties. We must do all we can for him."

"Certainly, we must. I am sure I should be

extremely sorry to lose him. What is the nature of his complaint? I was at the rectory last night, and he seemed perfectly well."

"They tell me," replied the Earl, "that it is a fit of apoplexy, and that the poor man is in a state of total insensibility. I would certainly go down and see him, late as it is, if I thought it would do him any good. I shall hear what my physician says."

"If you will give me leave, sir, I will walk down to the rectory, and bring you word how the doctor is. That will save you the necessity of going out so late."

"Very good, very good, do so. I am anxious to hear some more particular account."

Lord Spoonbill then departed for the rectory. And, when having heard what was the nature of the rector's illness, he had reason to apprehend that the hand of death was upon him, the young lord was more deeply moved. He really did make anxious haste to the parsonage. It is a great pity that he did not pay more attention to

these frequent admonitions which he received as it were from his better genius, and by which he was reminded that good principles were not altogether foreign to his nature; but he resisted them—he felt “a dread of shame among the spirits beneath.”

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN his lordship arrived at the rectory, he found the door standing open, and the lower apartments of the house deserted. While he was hesitating whether he should seek his way to the doctor's apartment, one of the domestics made her appearance, and his lordship very earnestly inquired after the afflicted pastor. With deep and unaffected feeling she replied, that her dear master was very, very ill, and with increased emotion continued—

“ Oh, my lord, if you will see him, perhaps he may know you—he may try to speak.”

“ Certainly I will see him. How long is it since he was taken?”

“ Only two hours, my lord. He was quite well this afternoon at five o'clock, and then he went into his study, where he always goes about that time, and we heard nothing of him till about two hours since ; his bell rang, and I went, your lordship, to see what my master wanted, and there I saw him sitting in his great chair quite speechless.”

The poor woman was overcome with her own emotion, and Lord Spoonbill hastened to the room into which the patient had been removed. When he entered the apartment, he saw by the light of one dim candle, and a recently kindled fire, the figure of Dr Greendale sitting in an easy chair, in a state of apparent insensibility, and on one side of him sat Mrs Greendale, grasping his hand with convulsive eagerness, and looking anxiously on his still and frozen features : how like and how unlike what he was ! On the other side Penelope was kneeling, holding him also by the hand, and hiding her face, that its expression of deep feeling might not needlessly

distress her aunt. Gentle sobbings were heard, and the hard breathings of the death-stricken man. His lordship stood for a few seconds as if rivetted to the spot where his eye first caught the sight of the melancholy group. Mrs Greendale first noticed the presence of a stranger, and recognised his lordship, who then advanced with slow and gentle step towards the sick man, and silently took the hand of Mrs Greendale, whose tears then flowed afresh, as with louder sobbings she exclaimed—

“Oh, my lord, what a sight is here! Those dear eyes have been fixed as they are now for hours. He was a good man, my lord; such a heart! such tenderness! Oh, he cannot, he cannot continue long! Oh, that I should live to see this!”

: As Mrs Greendale spoke, Penelope rose from her kneeling posture, and turning round, then first saw that Lord Spoonbill was in the room. His lordship intreated Mrs Greendale to compose herself, and then turning again towards the

sick man's chair, he held out his hand to Penelope, who resigned to his lordship the hand the dying man, which she had been holding. Lord Spoonbill took the offered hand, and kneeling on one knee pressed the hand to his lips, and looked with searching earnestness to the face of the patient, as if endeavouring to rouse him into consciousness and recollection. The eyes were fixed and motionless, and their brightness was passing away. After a few moments there appeared a convulsive movement of the lips, and there seemed to be a gleam of consciousness in the eye, and the hand which Lord Spoonbill had been holding was lifted up and placed on his lordship's head, from whence it fell in a moment, and the breathing, after one long sigh, died away and was heard no more. At the instant of the change, Mrs Greendale uttered a piercing shriek, and fell senseless to the floor. Penelope, as if unconscious of the distress of her aunt and the presence of Lord Spoonbill, knelt gently down, and lifting up her hands and her eyes,

murmured a prayer, which relieved for a moment her bursting heart; for tears came copiously to her aid, and her presence of mind was soon restored, and she assisted the domestics in removing Mrs Greendale into another apartment.

Lord Spoonbill then took his leave, and as he quitted the house of mourning he felt as he had never felt before. He had seen life in many of its varieties, but death had been to his eye and thoughts a stranger. He had now witnessed such a scene as he never had before. His mind was deeply and powerfully moved. But yesterday, and he had seen Dr Greendale in the fullness of strength and the vigour of health, and life was bright about him, and he was in its enjoyments and sympathies. One day, one little day, produced an awful change. The music of the tongue was mute, the benevolence of the look had fled, the animation of the intellect had vanished, and the beatings of the kind heart had ceased. Then did the young lord call to mind many kind expressions which the good man had

used towards him. He thought of the day when he went at the desire of the Earl his father, rather than by any prompting of his own inclination, to call at the rectory and take leave of the doctor, previously to setting out on his journey to Cambridge, when he first entered the University. He recollected that on that occasion he had been received in the doctor's study, and the good man carefully laid aside his books, and drew his chair round and conversed with him most cheerfully and most wisely; and he remembered how very tenderly he hinted at the possibility of juvenile follies, and how like a friend and companion he endeavoured to guard his mind against the fascinations of vice. He remembered also the fervent prayer which the good man uttered at parting, and the words seemed to live again, and he heard afresh the pious rector pray, "May God bless you, my dear young friend, and keep you from the evil that is in the world, and make you an ornament to that station which you are destined to fill." Then

came to his mind the sad neglect of all the kind precepts which the holy man had given him, and he felt that as yet the pastor's prayer had not been answered by the event. Now, had these feelings been followed by that sobriety and steadiness of thought which should be the natural fruit of such emotions, it had been well for him ; but unfortunately he had so much satisfaction in these emotions, and looked upon them as being virtue, and not merely the means of virtue, so that they failed to produce any lasting effect upon his mind, or to cause any change in his conduct. He was proud of his remorse and pleased with his regrets, and so the virtue which had its birth in a tear, evaporated when that tear was dry.

Before Lord Spoonbill had left the rectory many minutes, he met the medical gentleman on his way to the house. He stopped the physician and told him that all was over.

With due solemnity, and professional solemnity is very solemn indeed, the medical attendant of

the Earl of Smatterton shook his head and replied—

“ Indeed ! Aye, I thought I should find it so, from the account which the messenger gave me. However, my lord, as I am thus far, I may as well just look in. There is a possibility, perhaps, that even yet the use of the lancet may not be too late.”

Lord Spoonbill did not oppose the physician's wish, though he had no expectation of any benefit to be derived from it. He therefore returned and waited the report. The man of medicine soon rejoined his lordship, and pronounced the patient beyond the reach of professional skill.

“ The spirit, my lord, has left the body,” continued he, “ according to the vulgar expression.”

No man could more heartily enjoy the reprobation of vulgar phraseology than could Lord Spoonbill, generally speaking ; but at this moment he was not disposed to be critical, and he answered the medical man rather pettishly. He

was not for his own part able so quickly to make the transition from the grave to the gay as persons more accustomed to such scenes. It is also not very uncommon for the imperfectly virtuous to be exceedingly morose when under the impression of serious or religious feelings. The physician was very much surprised at the manner in which his lordship received the above-quoted speech; for it is a great absurdity in these enlightened days to imagine that there is any such thing as a soul. If there had been any such thing, the medical gentlemen, who have very minutely dissected the human body, certainly must have found it. But as they have not seen it, clearly it has no existence, and that which we take for the soul is only a sort of a kind of a something that is not a soul, but is only a word of four letters. Many of the Newmarket students indeed had discovered this fact before the dissectors had revealed it.

When the medical philosopher observed that Lord Spoonbill did not express any approbation

of the phraseology whereby a doubt of the existence of a soul was intimated, he did not consider that the disapprobation might be more from feeling than from opinion, and therefore he proceeded to the discussion of the subject in a regular and systematic method. His lordship was, however, not at all disposed to listen to his arguments, and the two walked side by side in silence to the castle.

When the Earl saw his medical oracle, he directed his inquiries first to him—

“ Doctor, you will be seated,” having been uttered with its usual majesty of condescension, the Earl then proceeded to ask—

“ And now, doctor, what report do you bring of our worthy rector ?”

“ Dr Greendale, my lord, is no more. Life was extinct before I could reach him ; and I am of opinion that nothing could have saved him.”

“ Indeed ! you don’t say so ! It is a sad loss. The doctor was a most excellent man. I had a very high opinion of him. I gave him the living

purely for his moral worth. He had nothing else to recommend him. I always make it an invariable rule to distribute the church preferment which is in my power, purely on the ground of merit. I am never influenced by any political feeling."

"Your lordship," replied the physician, who understood his lordship's mind as well as his body, and perhaps better; "your lordship is remarkable for the good judgment which you always exercise in these matters, and indeed in everything else where the public good is concerned. It would be well for the country if the distribution of public and responsible offices were in such good hands. We should not hear so much the language of dissatisfaction."

"Doctor, you are disposed to compliment. But it is not very easy to prevent the language of dissatisfaction. It is too common and too indiscriminate. It is not proper that the common people should acquire a habit of carping at all the acts of the government. The multitude

cannot understand these things. Now I have studied the science of government with great and close attention, and I think I do know something which even the ministers themselves do not rightly understand. They are engaged in the dry details of office, and they have been brought up in the trammels of prejudice. For my part I have no prejudice. I do not take a detailed but comprehensive and philosophical view of things."

Much more to the same purpose did his lordship condescend to utter in the hearing and for the instruction of the medical philosopher. The sum and substance of the harangue was to inculcate that truly philosophical view of government which recommends that the multitude should leave the work of opposition to the old aristocracy of the country, and only now and then, as that aristocracy may dictate, present petitions to parliament to countenance and support the measures proposed by his majesty's opposition. The man of medicine was convinced of the truth and justice of every sentiment which the Earl of

Smatterton was pleased in the profundity of his wisdom to advance : for though his lordship was in opposition he did not like to be opposed : and who does ? His lordship then offered some refreshment to his medical friend, and the subject of the decease of the rector was renewed.

“ I am very much afraid,” said his lordship, “ that the poor widow is not left in very comfortable circumstances. But I will see that something shall be done for her.”

After his lordship had received from the physician his meed of praise for his liberality of intention towards the destitute widow, he proceeded to speak of his own good intentions :

“ I am very sorry that I did not see poor Greendale before his death. I had no idea he was in such immediate danger. I certainly should have gone down to the rectory in person, late as it was, had I been aware that the good man was so near his end. However, I did all I could ; I sent for the best advice that was to be had.”

This was a very considerate and proper speech.

Thus did the Earl of Smatterton liberally repay the compliments which he had received from his medical friend and adviser. It should also be remarked, that the expression which his lordship has used more than once is rather a singularity. He dwelt very much upon the lateness of the hour. Now it was notorious, that in London there was scarcely a single house where night was turned into day and day into night so entirely as in Lord Smatterton's: but in the country his lordship set a most excellent example of early hours. For, as he very wisely observed, agricultural pursuits require day-light; the poor people in the country cannot bear the expense of candles, and therefore it is highly proper to set them the example of early hours. This was certainly very considerate of his lordship; and for this considerateness he was duly praised by his physician. It is truly astonishing that anybody should ever be censorious, for there is much more to be got by praising than by blaming one's fellow-creatures.

The physician took a handsome fee and a polite leave; and Colonel Crop just at that moment entered the saloon, having finished his evening's entertainment at Neverden Hall. To him also was communicated the intelligence of the sudden decease of the worthy rector of Smatterton. And as soon as he heard the information, he said :

“Poor man, I am sorry for him : has he left a family ?”

He had not left a family, or, if he had, Colonel Crop would have been very sorry for them too. The hour of rest was arrived, and more than arrived. But Lord Spoonbill enjoyed not the sweets of repose. His mind was torn by conflicting thoughts, and harassed by bitter reflections and self-reproaches. He thought of the mean transaction of the morning and the solemn scene of the evening. For awhile he had a fancy that the principle of virtue was the ascendant feeling of his soul, and he thought that he would not pursue the scheme which he had commenced. He looked at the letter which he had

intercepted, and had some faint notions that he should cause it to reach its destination. At all events, he would not be so mean as to open the letter; that was an offence of which he had never been guilty. He consigned the letter to the flames. He thought of Dr Greendale, and he was all virtue and penitence. He thought of Penelope, and considered that it would be a pity for so amiable, and intelligent, and affectionate a creature to be sacrificed to such a dull, plodding, commercial man as Robert Darnley. At length, wearied by a multitude of thoughts, he fell asleep. But ever and anon his rest was broken by painful and frightful dreams. He was grasping the hand of a lovely and interesting one, and was using the language of passion and persuasion, and he looked up to catch the smile of beauty and the languishing look of love—and there were before him the glassy eye, and the quivering lip, and the ghastly looks of death. He felt upon his head the hand of blessing, and then there rung in his ears the horrid language of

execration. He saw the mild and venerable form of the pious friend of his early youth, and he heard from his lips the sentiments of devotion and the promises of hope ; and then the face was distorted by pain, and the voice was all the harshness of reproach and the keenness of condemnation. Gradually this agitation of the spirits subsided, and the wearied frame sunk into calmer rest ; and when the day-light shone into his apartment, and the morning sun awakened the song of the birds, the darkness and gloom of the night were forgotten, and the mind of the young patrician recovered its wonted insensibility and apathy to all that is good and generous. The emotions of the past night were ridiculed, and thus the character received an additional impetus to that which is bad.

CHAPTER VII.

ON the following morning the news of Dr Greendale's sudden death reached the neighbouring village of Neverden. Mr Darnley was deeply concerned at the intelligence, and prepared to pay an immediate visit to the afflicted widow to offer such consolation and assistance as circumstances might require. On his way from home he went through Neverden park, and called at the hall to acquaint his patron baronet of the dismal intelligence just received. Sir George met Mr Darnley at the door of the house, and thus the rector was saved the trouble of alighting. Another trouble was also saved him, namely, that of communicating the news to the baronet: for

as soon as the worshipful magistrate saw Mr Darnley, he bawled out at the top of his voice :

“ Good morning, Darnley, good morning. Bad news from Smatterton ; poor Greendale’s dead. What will become of the poor widow and his pretty niece ? Very sudden indeed. I always thought he would go off so. Will you alight ? I suppose you are going over to Smatterton. Do you know who is to have the living ? It is a pretty good thing, I believe.”

This was a mode of address not at all in unison with the feelings of Mr Darnley, though quite in keeping with the character and habits of Sir George Aimwell. Not that Sir George was by any means destitute of feeling. It is very likely he might have been as much concerned at the loss, as others who might express themselves more pathetically ; but, as the proverbial expression has it, it was his way. This expression is an apology for anything, and for everything, and more especially for all breaches of decorum and violations of propriety. It is quite enough to say, “ he

means no harm, it is his way." It was a way however which Mr Darnley did not approve and dared not rebuke ; for he had so high a respect for rank, as one of the glorious blessings of our constitution, that he could never violate its sacredness by making it the subject of reproof, otherwise than by indirect and general hints. Mr Darnley was a strict, but not a sturdy moralist. To the questions of Sir George he returned such answers as he was able to give, and, bowing politely, was about to continue his ride, when the baronet called out to him again :

" Well, but I am sorry for the doctor, poor fellow. I was going to send him some game this morning, though we had but a bad day's sport yesterday. I shall send you a brace or two of birds, Darnley."

Mr Darnley made his acknowledgments for the baronet's liberality, and pursued his journey, meditating on the various subjects and thoughts which such events as these usually excite in such minds as his. When he arrived at Smat-

terton, at the very entrance of the village he saw symptoms of a general calamity. The old men were standing in little groups, and looking serious, and talking with great earnestness on the subject of their loss: and when they saw Mr Darnley ride past they drew aside and made more serious reverence than usual; and, while they uncovered their silvery heads and bowed to the clergyman, there was in their looks an expression which seemed to ask for some more acknowledgment of their homage than the return bend of the head; they seemed to implore him to address them. And, as he was a man of discernment and observation, he stopt his horse and spoke to an old, a very old man, who was leaning on a stick which trembled under his pressure, and said :

“ So, my good friend, I am concerned to hear that you have lost your worthy rector.”

“ Yes, sir, it is God’s will. I am sure I did not think that I should live to see that day. Please your reverence, it was but yesterday morning that I was speaking to my children

about putting me into the ground; and I told them that I should die contented if I thought that they would continue to attend to the good doctor's instructions. And I thought that I should have that good man to read at my grave. Ah! sir, these are mysteries in providence; here am I spared year after year merely to cumber the ground, while our dear rector is cut off in the midst of his days and usefulness."

"You are rather advanced in years, I believe; I have not seen you for some time. Have you been unwell?"

"Yes, sir, I am nearly ninety, and at my time of life I cannot expect anything else than illness and infirmity. I have not been out of my doors for many months, but I could not help hobbling out a little way just to hear some particulars about our worthy rector. Alack, sir, I had need give him a good word. He was my best friend, so kind——"

The old man wept audibly; and Mr Darnley, who had been affected by the very aspect of the

village as he entered it, felt himself unable to make any reply, and rode on. When he reached the rectory, and enquired for Mrs Greendale, the domestic announced that her mistress was too ill to be seen, but that Miss Primrose would make her appearance immediately. Happy was it for Penelope that there was on the present occasion a division of interests and an opposing set of feelings. Her troubles had come thickly upon her; but the very meeting together of these sorrows tended to soften them, or, what was equivalent to that, to excite and compel her to an unusual exertion of moral fortitude; and the very circumstance of Mrs Greendale's acute and severe feeling was also the means of exciting and rousing Penelope.

When therefore she met Mr Darnley, it was with great composure and steadiness of countenance, and she was able to narrate, with consistency and intelligibility, the particulars of her uncle's decease. She mentioned the visit of Lord Spoonbill, and spoke very highly of the great

propriety of his behaviour and the manifestation which he gave of good feeling. Mr Darnley was pleased to hear so good an account, and hoped that so solemn and impressive a scene might be instrumental in producing some good effect on the young lord's conduct. As Penelope was always regarded by the family at Neverden as possessing a steadiness of judgment beyond her years, Mr Darnley, after the ordinary talk on such occasions, ventured to extend his inquiries as to the probable disposition of the widow and Penelope after they should leave the rectory, which must of course be resigned to the doctor's successor.

The young lady professed herself quite at a loss to know what arrangements might be contemplated by Mrs Greendale; but as to herself she expressed her determination to take, as soon as possible, a situation as governess in a private family, and said that she was sure that the Countess of Smatterton would give every assistance in her power.

Mr Darnley expressed himself somewhat asto-

nished at this decision, under what he called present circumstances. Now here it may be proper and necessary to explain. We have narrated, or at least very strongly intimated, that there subsisted between the niece of the late Dr Greendale and the only son of Mr Darnley an engagement, sanctioned by the parents of the latter. We have also said, that Lord Spoonbill had cast the eyes of affection on Penelope Primrose, and that in order to wean her affections from him to whom she was engaged, he had intercepted more than once letters sent from Mr Robert Darnley to her. We have stated also, that the apparent cessation of the correspondence on the part of the young gentleman had disturbed and distressed the mind of Penelope. Her spirit, however, was above naming or hinting the matter to the parents of her absent friend. We have also informed our readers that, only on the very day of Dr Greendale's decease, a letter had been intercepted and destroyed by Lord Spoonbill, and that a letter had reached the rectory of Neverden from the young gentleman. In this letter Mr Robert Darn-

ley had apprised his parents and sisters that they might expect him in England in about six weeks after the arrival of that communication : he had also informed them that he had written to Penelope by the same conveyance, informing her of the same fact. He had also, in one part of that letter which he had sent to Neverden, addressed a line or two to his sister Ann, requesting her to observe if there were in Penelope Primrose any symptoms of alienated affection, or any manifest partiality to any other person. This last enquiry was thought merely the effect of that fanciful jealousy which is, in some peculiarly-constructed minds, the effect and concomitant of love : and the general impression at the rectory of Neverden was, that Robert Darnley would be in England in six weeks, and that, as soon as conveniently it could be arranged after his return, he would be married to Penelope. It was therefore with no small share of astonishment that Mr Darnley heard the young lady make such a declaration as that above recorded.

“ But, my young friend, why have recourse to such a step as that? It would be much better that you should take up your abode with us at Neverden. Indeed, I must almost insist upon it, if you will not otherwise be induced to comply. Under any other circumstances I should not perhaps recommend such a step, but now that you are so situated that you must soon leave Smatterton, I think you cannot with propriety do otherwise.”

To this language of Mr Darnley Penelope only replied with great composure, indeed almost with apathy: “ I must beg, sir, that you will not press that subject. You will, no doubt, be ultimately convinced that I am acting more properly in submitting myself to the direction and advice of Lady Smatterton.”

At this speech of the young lady there came into the mind of Mr Darnley a suspicion that the jealousy expressed in his son's letter was not altogether unfounded. Not that he could have supposed that Penelope Primrose should deli-

berately prefer a lover like Lord Spoonbill to a young man of sense and good conduct like Mr Robert Darnley ; but he was well aware of the fascinations of rank and the allurements of fashionable splendour, and he also knew that it was very possible for worthless and ignorant men, by means of the mockery and mummery of conventional politeness, to render themselves not only not disagreeable, but absolutely engaging and interesting to the young and unpractised. He recollected the very handsome manner in which Penelope had spoken of Lord Spoonbill, and he also bethought himself of the unusual event of the heir of Smatterton honoring the party of Mrs Greendale with his company. Then there came to his remembrance that, during the whole, or nearly the whole evening, Penelope was engaged at the pianoforte, and that she joined Lord Spoonbill in several duets : and there was also a recollection that his lordship, as soon as he entered the room at the rectory, took a seat on a sofa by the side of Miss Primrose, and di-

rected his conversation for awhile almost exclusively to her. Mr Darnley, having compared all these circumstances, began to wonder at himself that he should ever have been so dull as not to observe that the affections of Penelope Primrose belonged more to Lord Spoonbill than to Robert Darnley.

Having made this discovery, and having silently reproached himself for his stupidity that he had not made it before, he did not hint the least word of his suspicion to Miss Primrose; but simply abstained from farther urging the matter about her residence at Neverden. Mr Darnley was too proud a man to stoop to any expostulations or reproofs, or to show anything like resentment upon the occasion. For he did not consider that Penelope had inflicted an injury on his family, but had merely declined a proffered honor.

He continued therefore his conversation upon other topics connected with the doctor's decease, and, leaving a message of sympathy for Mrs Greendale, politely, rather more politely than

usual, took his leave of Penelope. She observed indeed a change in his manner, but ascribed it to the unusually serious impression produced on his mind by the loss of a friend and acquaintance.

From the rectory Mr Darnley proceeded to the castle, to make a call of homage on the Earl of Smatterton. His lordship received the homage graciously, and said, as was usual with him on all such occasions, "Mr Darnley, I beg you will be seated."

Mr Darnley accordingly took a seat, and Lord Smatterton accordingly began to speak forth his own praises of his own most mighty condescension and benevolence.

"You have been at the rectory this morning, Mr Darnley? It was very proper and suitable that your's should be the first visit to the house of mourning. You found the poor woman well, I hope; that is, as well as may be under present circumstances?"

Mr Darnley informed his lordship of the particulars of his visit to the rectory, not forgetting to

mention his own offer to give an asylum to the doctor's niece.

“Mr Darnley,” replied his lordship, “I very much approve of your liberality. I can assure you that I shall take care that neither the widow nor the niece shall be destitute. I have always entertained a very high opinion of Dr Greendale. He was truly an excellent man. As soon as I heard of his illness I sent for my own physician to attend him, and had it not been so very late in the evening I should have gone down to see him myself. And indeed, notwithstanding it was so late, I certainly should have gone had I been aware of the danger in which he was. However I did everything in my power, and I shall also have an eye to the well-being of those who are by his death left destitute; for I think I have understood that the doctor had no property of any consideration independently of his living. But pray, Mr Darnley, what think you of the propriety of giving to the world a volume or two of the doctor's sermons? They contain much

good sense and sound doctrine. They are not indeed so sublime as Irving's, or so beautiful as Alison's, nor was it necessary that they should be ; for the common people cannot understand the sublime and beautiful. What think you, I say, Mr Darnley, of the propriety and eligibility of publishing some of Dr Greendale's sermons?"

"With all due deference to your lordship's superior judgment in such matters, I am humbly of opinion," replied Mr Darnley, "that good sense and sound doctrine are no great recommendation of sermons, at least they do not ensure popularity so effectually as sublimity and beauty. But I believe, my lord, that Dr Greendale was engaged on a very important controversial work. Now I have heard that controversial theology has a much better sale than practical divinity, and that sermons hardly ever go off, unless there be some peculiar interest attached to the person who wrote them, or to the circumstances under which they were preached. If, therefore, your lordship is disposed to assist in the publication

of any of the late doctor's writings, I should humbly apprehend that his great controversial treatise would be most profitable to his widow, and bring more fame to his memory."

"That may be very true, Mr Darnley, but I do not like controversy ; it unsettles people's minds. I never knew any good come of it. But while there are sectarians there must, to be sure, be refutations of their errors, and the best way to oppose sectarianism is by means of argument ; for I am a decided advocate for religious liberty, only I do not like to have the minds of the common people disturbed and unsettled. These matters, Mr Darnley, I shall leave to you as a friend of the late doctor ; and if you are disposed to publish any of his writings, they cannot come out under better auspices. At all events I shall subscribe for a certain number of copies."

"Your lordship is very generous ; and I hope you will not find in the writings of the worthy rector anything that shall tend to unsettle the minds of the people, but rather the reverse. For

I understand that the object of the treatise which I have mentioned to your lordship, is to put an end to controversy. I recollect hearing my worthy friend say, that he had answered and refuted every objection that had ever been urged against the established church, and that there was not a single sect which he had not opposed and confuted."

"Well, well, if the work is of such a comprehensive nature, I think it important that it should be published. It is a great pity, however, that it did not make its appearance during the doctor's life-time, it might have procured him a bishopric ; but really, Mr Darnley, I don't know how it is, but I have observed that ministers are not sufficiently attentive to men of merit. They give away their preferment merely for the purpose of parliamentary influence. Now, for my part, I never do anything of the kind—I always patronize merit. I gave the living of Smatterton to Dr Greendale, purely on account of his merit. I wish that this consideration weighed more than it does with those

whose patronage is more extensive and important than mine."

Mr Darnley had a better opinion of his majesty's ministers than the Earl of Smatterton had expressed, and therefore he did not very readily echo the last speech which his lordship made. He took however especial care not to say anything that might impeach his lordship's judgment and sagacity. The peer and the clergyman parted on very good terms. The first was delighted that he had enjoyed an opportunity of speaking in laudatory terms of his own benevolence and wisdom; and the last was very well satisfied that while he had paid due reverence to rank, he had not compromised his loyalty to his majesty's ministers, by complimenting at their expense a member of his majesty's opposition.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE day for Dr Greendale's funeral arrived. It was Sunday. This arrangement was made in order to give opportunity for the poor and the labouring classes to attend, and pay their last tribute of respect to their benefactor and friend. It was a very fine day, such as often happens in the middle of September; and the day seemed like a holiday. For, such is the nature of the human mind that the attending on any ceremony seems more a matter of amusement than of sorrow. Joy, it appears, cannot be solitary, and sorrow can hardly be social. When a multitude assembles, be the purpose what it may for which the assembling takes place, it wears generally

the aspect of amusement or pleasure. This is particularly the case at funerals, and much more so in other countries than our own.

The village of Smatterton was unusually full. Many came from a distance, some to visit their friends, some for a little extraordinary amusement for the Sunday, and some probably with a desire to pay a tribute of respect to the late rector ; for the name of Dr Greendale was celebrated beyond the narrow limits of his own parish. There were visitors at almost every house in the village, and the little public-houses, which on Sunday were ordinarily closed, now were indulged with the privilege of being open. Indeed the indulgence was absolutely necessary. The funeral procession was very long, and many of the mourners were mourners indeed. They had a great regard for the late doctor, not for any very profuse generosity which he had exhibited, for that was not in his power ; not for any unbounded hospitality, for in that respect he was limited in his circumstances, and confined as to

his time ; not because he was a very eloquent and entertaining preacher, for his sermons were plainness itself ; not because he was a sturdy politician, either demagogue or sycophant, for it was absolutely impossible for any one to conjecture with plausibility to which party he belonged ; not because he indulged and flattered the vices of either the great or the little, for he was not unsparing in his rebukes of wickedness whenever he met with it ; but they loved and respected him for the steadiness and respectability of his character, for the integrity, purity, simplicity, and sincerity of his life. Therefore they mourned at his grave, and wept tears of real sorrow at the loss of him.

The very persons who paid tithes were sorry that he was departed from them, for they did not think it likely that any other could be put in his place to whom they would more cheerfully make such payments. The funeral service was impressively read by Mr Darnley, and in the afternoon the same gentleman took the duty at the church,

in order to deliver a funeral sermon for his late friend and neighbour.

While the rites of sepulture were being performed at the church, the daughters of Mr Darnley were, by their presence and kind sympathy, endeavouring to console the sorrowing widow, and the doubly orphaned niece, at the rectory house. Miss Darnley had heard at the beginning of the week from her father the suspicion which he entertained of the unsteadiness of Penelope's affections; and though the present was not a proper time to make any direct enquiries, or to use any obvious diligence to discover the secret, yet she could not help showing her attention a little alive to aught which might seem to promise any clue for the discovery of the young lady's state of mind to her brother. And as Mr Darnley had given a hint that Penelope Primrose seemed to regard Lord Spoonbill with very great approbation, and to throw herself entirely on the patronage of the Countess, Miss Darnley endeavoured to let a

word or two fall which might either corroborate or remove the suspicions which had been entertained on that head.

It was very easy to direct the conversation to their noble friends at the castle. Mrs Greendale and Penelope both expressed great gratitude for the kind sympathy which they had experienced from the earl and countess. Penelope also praised the very humane and feeling conduct of Lord Spoonbill; but the language which she used, and the manner in which she spoke of his lordship, gave no light upon the subject of suspicion. It was not indeed probable that the son of so proud a nobleman as the Earl of Smaterton should think of allying himself by marriage with the niece of a clergyman, portionless and unconnected. Nor indeed was it likely that a young woman of such excellent understanding as Miss Primrose should be weak enough to imagine an attachment where none existed. Suffice it to say, that notwithstanding all the pains which Miss Darnley used for the purpose,

she could not ascertain whether or not there existed such an attachment. Her conclusion rather inclined to the opinion that her brother's suspicions were but a little emanation of constitutional jealousy.

We have said that Mr Darnley was engaged to perform the service of the church in the afternoon. On this occasion the multitude assembled was very great. The church was crowded to suffocation, and besides the great mass of people within, there were also many without; many young persons who loved rather to idle about the churchyard than to take pains to press their way in. They loitered about in groups, and they amused themselves with reading the monumental inscriptions, and some perhaps were then and there reminded of pious and amiable parents, of intimate friends and companions. They did not loiter altogether unprofitably, if feelings of a kind and tender nature were excited in their breasts by recollections of the departed.

But there was one who seemed to have no companion there, or friend among the living or the dead. There was a young female in deep mourning, walking sorrowfully up and down the broad gravel-walk which led from the road to the church-door. She looked not at those that passed her, and she did not seem to regard the monumental inscriptions with any interest. Her form was graceful, but her figure was small. There was a paleness on her cheeks which looked like the paleness of sorrow and privation; but amidst that paleness might be discerned much beauty. There had been brightness in those eyes, and dimples on those cheeks, and wreathed smiles upon those lips; but these were now departed, and instead thereof was the

“Leadèd look that loves the ground.”

She seemed to be heedless of all that was around her. The young beaux and coquettes of the village attracted not her attention, and all the change of look that was seen was an occa-

sional and earnest direction of her eyes towards the door of the church when any footsteps were heard near it. There were no tears in the eyes, but there was an expression of countenance, which told that tears had been, and there was a stillness of sorrow which intimated that tears had done their utmost, and could no longer relieve.

The young are ever prone to pity, and they most deeply and feelingly commiserate such as seem to be least importunate for sympathy; for despair is the sublimity of grief, and its very unobtrusiveness rivets the attention. An image of sorrow like this is not easily shaken from the mind. We may pass by it, and seem not to heed it; but it comes upon us again in our recollections; and our thoughts revert to it without effort, or even against effort. Thus did this vision fascinate and enchain the minds of those who in the indolence of their sabbath holiday were strolling about the churchyard. By degrees their idle talk was suspended or

subdued. Their own little interests were forgotten, and they one and all wondered who it could be. And they were saying one to another, "How beautiful she looks!"—"How very pale she is!"—"She looks as if she were very ill." Many such remarks were made, but they were uttered in a low tone, and with an endeavour not to appear to take particular notice of the melancholy stranger.

At length the service in the church was over, and the multitude was pouring out. Then the beautiful mourner took her station at the porch, and watched with earnestness every face that passed by; and over her pale countenance there came a hectic flush, as the numbers increased and as the expected one seemed to be nearer. The numbers diminished and the paleness returned.

A sound of carriage-wheels was heard at a little distance, and the stranger, moving from the porch at which she had stationed herself, saw in

another direction a narrow path, leading from a different door, and on that path were walking three persons, who, before she could reach them, were seated in the carriage and had vanished from her sight.

To explain these appearances as far as it is at present necessary, we must turn our attention awhile from the newly-introduced fair one, and accompany the Earl and Countess, with their hopeful son, back again to the castle.

Scarcely had the Earl alighted from the carriage when he was informed that, during his absence, a young person in deep mourning had been at the castle nearly an hour ago, and had been very importunate for an audience with his lordship. To the very natural enquiries of name, description, and business, the only answer which could be given was, that the stranger refused to state her name or business, and that her appearance was that of a very respectable and rather pretty young woman; and that though she had

expressed great anxiety to see his lordship, yet there was nothing in her manner obtrusive or troublesome.

While this information was being conveyed to the Earl, the Countess had passed on to her own apartment ; but Lord Spoonbill attended to what was said, and that with no small share of interest. His recollection and conscience interpreted the mystery, and his ingenuity was now taxed to evade an exposure, which he dreaded. Assuming an air of indifference, he said :

“ Perhaps, sir, it may be a daughter of one of your Yorkshire tenants. She is described as being in mourning, and if I recollect rightly, we heard of the death of one of them very lately. It is however very unsuitable to come here on a Sunday on matters of business. I am about to walk down into the village, and if I can meet with the young person I will save you the trouble of attending to her.”

“ Do so, Spoonbill, do so : I do not approve of being interrupted on a Sunday ; it is a bad ex-

ample to the people in the country: it does not so much signify in London."

It was fortunate, or, more properly speaking unfortunate, for the young lord that the Earl his father was very easy to be imposed upon; and perhaps the more so from the very high opinion which he entertained of his own wisdom and sagacity. But such was his confidence in the good conduct and good disposition of his son, that he would not easily have been brought to give credence to any story of a disgraceful nature told against him. The young man took advantage of this, and so he always passed for a very prudent and steady person: and it was not unfrequent that the Earl himself would commend the steadiness and sobriety of his son, and propose him as an example to those who were companions of his irregularities.

After the conversation above recorded, the young lord made the best of his way through the park towards that gate which led into the village; carefully at the same time observing that his

victim did not escape him and return by another path to the castle.

He met her not in the park; and when he arrived at the gate he was at a loss which way to turn. It would have been a miserable exposure of his conduct had the stranger found her way back to the castle and obtained an interview with the Earl. Still worse in the mind of Lord Spoonbill would it have been that the Countess should become acquainted with that part of his character and conduct which might be communicated to her by the mysterious stranger; for, with all his irregularity of demeanour, and amidst conduct which manifested a most serious want of good feeling and good principle, he felt a regard for his mother, and an anxiety for her comfort and composure of mind: he disguised himself to his father from fear, and to his mother from love.

Agitated by distracting thoughts, he stood at the park gate, gazing alternately in different directions; and by the intensity of his feelings was at last rivetted in an almost unconscious

state of mind to the spot on which he was standing. Suddenly his pulse beat quicker, and his heart seemed to swell within him, when at a little distance he saw the dreaded one approaching him. Had he seen her anywhere else his first impulse would have been to avoid her; but here his truest and best policy was to submit to an interview, however painful. Shall he meet her with kindness?—shall he meet her with reproaches?—shall he meet her with coldness? These were enquiries rapidly passing through his mind as she drew nearer and nearer. It was difficult for him to decide between cruelty and hypocrisy: but the last was most natural to him, so far as custom is a second nature.

The afflicted one moved slowly with her eyes fixed on the ground, and she saw not her enemy till so near to him, that on lifting up her face and recognizing his well-known features, the sudden shock produced a slight hysteric shriek.

Lord Spoonbill was not so lost to all feeling of humanity as to be insensible to the anguish of

mind which she now suffered, who had once regarded him as a friend, and had loved him, "not wisely, but too well." He held out his hand to her with an unpremeditated look of kindness and affection ; and which, being unpremeditated, bore the aspect of sincerity. The stranger at first hesitated, and seemed not disposed to accept the offered hand ; but she looked up in his face, and the blood mounted to her cheeks and the tears stood in her eyes, and she gave him her hand, and covered her face and wept bitterly.

There are moments in which shameless profligates look foolish and feel that they are contemptible. This was such a moment to Lord Spoonbill. He was moved, and he was mortified that he was moved ; and there was a general feeling of confusion and perplexity in his mind. What could he say ? or how could he act ? He began to stammer out something like gentleness, and something like reproof. But she who stood before him was as an accusing spirit, to whom

apology was mockery, and repentance too late. At length, when the first emotion began to abate, he said :

“ Ellen, what brings you here? - Surely this is not a proper day for a visit like this. What could induce you too to endeavour to see the Earl? If you once mention the affair to him you are irretrievably ruined; I can do nothing for you.”

A reproachful look, a deep sigh, and the withdrawing her hand from his, were the only answer which the above speech received. She attempted to speak, but words were wanting; and after a little more appearance of confusion on the part of his lordship, he seemed for the first time to notice her mourning dress, and with real tenderness of manner asked her what peculiar loss or misfortune had brought her to Smatterton. - Assuming then a steadiness of tone and greater composure of manner, she at last spoke out :

“ My lord, it is indeed a deep affliction which has brought me to appeal to your pity. You

took me from a widowed mother ; you deserted me with promises unfulfilled. I returned to that dwelling which was destined to be my home no more. I have closed my mother's eyes, which did indeed look a forgiveness which she could not speak. I am now an outcast, unless I can find the means of reaching a distant relative, who will give me a home. I have made frequent application by letter to your lordship and to the Earl, and I was fearful that my letters had not reached you ; and I had no resource but to come here to speak for myself."

Lord Spoonbill had received these letters ; not only those addressed to himself, but those designed for his father. He had paid but little attention to them ; for the name of Ellen Fitzpatrick had ceased to be interesting to him. He had in former days made small pecuniary remittances ; but had latterly declined them. But now seeing before him one whom he had deeply injured, and beholding her as a suppliant in the most humble attitude, and hearing that it was possible that an

arrangement might be made, whereby he should no longer be troubled with her visits or letters, he felt his mind greatly relieved, and he was disposed to be generous. He therefore promptly supplied her with the means of reaching her friend, and enjoined, with no little earnestness, that she should leave Smatterton immediately, and that without even returning again to the village.

What account the hopeful hereditary legislator gave to the Earl we shall not state; suffice it to say, that he told his own story, that the Earl believed it, that it answered the purpose for which it was invented. And it came to pass that, on the day following, when there was mention made of the young person in deep mourning who was seen in the churchyard on Sunday, it was confidently stated, and easily believed, that it was a young lady out of her mind who had escaped from her keepers.

CHAPTER IX.

WE have spoken favorably of the Countess. She was for the most part a considerate as well as a benevolent woman: we say for the most part, because we must make some slight exception. And if our readers be angry with us for not indulging them with perfect characters, we can only say we are sorry for it, and will promise that as soon as we meet with a faultless character we will give the history thereof to the world. In the meantime we must take what we find, and make the best of it. The Countess of Smatterton then was, as we have said, possessed of many good qualities, but was not perfect. There was occasionally a want of considerateness

in her very benevolence; and most people indeed, who do any good at all to their fellow-creatures, prefer doing it in their own way. There is perhaps some benefit in this; for otherwise the opulent and powerful would be too much importuned, and the number of the dependent be most awfully increased. To proceed then: we have observed that the Countess was not uniformly considerate. She could, and for the most part did, bestow her favors with great grace and urbanity of manner; but occasionally she was rather forgetful of the proprieties; she did not always consider that what might be suitable in one person or station might not be suitable in another. This feeling was manifested in the interview with which her grace was pleased to honor Miss Primrose, soon after the decease of her valuable friend and relative, Dr Greendale.

The Countess very kindly invited the ladies to the castle. Her ladyship received the widow and her niece in her own apartment. No one knew so well as the Countess how to manage the lan-

guage and address of consolation. Mrs Greendale was charmed with the delicate and feeling manner in which she was received; and her ladyship was happy that any attention of hers could gratify and soothe the afflicted.

With an exquisite dexterity of address the Countess contrived to introduce an allusion to the situation of Penelope Primrose; and as neither the young lady nor her aunt was in full possession of the circumstances in which Mr Primrose was at that time, they both had the impression on their minds that there was no other immediate prospect for his daughter than the exertion of her own talents and acquirements to provide her with the means of support. The worthy rector had not as yet been long enough in the grave to give Penelope an opportunity of feeling the difference of Mrs Greendale's manner towards her; but she had penetration enough to foresee what must be her situation so long as she remained under the same roof as her aunt. With the utmost readiness did she therefore listen to

the Countess, when speaking of the various employments to which a young person situated as she was might turn her attention.

“ Lord Smatterton,” said the Countess, “ has frequently mentioned the subject to me, and he recommends a situation in a private family. There are certainly some advantages and some disadvantages in such a situation : very much depends upon the temper and disposition of almost every individual in the family. It is possible that you may meet with a family consisting of reasonable beings, but it is more than probable that you may have to encounter arrogance or ignorance ; these are not excluded from any rank.”

This language seemed to Penelope as an intimation that a school would be a more desirable sphere in which to make profitable use of her acquisitions. It was not for her to oppose any objections to the implied recommendations of so good and so great a friend as her ladyship ; but she felt considerable reluctance to that kind of employment, which she fancied had been sug-

gested. Her reply was embarrassed but respectful, intimating that she was ready to adopt any mode of employment which the Countess might be pleased to suggest. Her ladyship gave a smile of approbation to the acquiescent disposition which the young lady manifested, and added :

“ If Miss Primrose could conquer a little feeling of timidity, which might naturally enough be experienced by one so retired in her habits, it would be possible for her, with her great vocal powers and musical talent, not only to find means of maintenance, but to arrive at a competent independence, by adopting the musical profession. Then she would also enjoy the pleasure of good society. If such arrangement be agreeable, I will most willingly charge myself with providing the preparatory instruction under a distinguished professor. What does my young friend think of such occupation ?”

Had sincerity been the readiest road to the patronage and friendship of the great, this question might have been very readily and easily

answered. But Penelope knew better than to suppose that any advantage could arise from a direct opposition to the wishes of a patron. Repugnant as she was to the proposal, she dared not to whisper the least syllable of contradiction, on the ground of dislike, to the profession ; but after a blush of mortification, which the Countess mistook for a symptom of diffidence, she replied :

“ I fear that your ladyship is disposed to estimate rather too highly the humble talents I may possess, and that I shall not answer the expectations which so distinguished patronage might raise.”

The Countess was not altogether pleased with this shadow of an objection ; for it seemed to call in question her own discernment. She therefore replied with some quickness :

“ I beg your pardon, Miss Primrose : I have usually been considered as something of a judge in these matters ; and, if I do not greatly mistake, you are peculiarly qualified for the profession ; and, if you would condescend to adopt my

recommendation, I will be answerable for its success."

The Countess, with all her kindness and considerateness, had not the slightest idea that there could be in a young person, situated as Penelope, any feeling of pride or thought of degradation. But pride was in being before titles were invented ; and even republics, which, in the arrogance of equality, may repel from their political vocabulary all distinctions of fellow citizens, cannot eradicate pride from the human heart. In a civilized country there is not perhaps an individual to be found who is incapable of the sensation of degradation. Miss Primrose thought it degrading to become a public singer ; she felt that it would be publishing to the world that she was not independent. The world cares little about such matters. Right or wrong, however, this feeling took possession of the young lady's mind ; and as pride does not enter the mind by means of reasoning, it will not be expelled by any process of ratiocination. For all this, how-

ever, the worthy Countess could make no allowance ; and it appeared to her that if a young person were under the necessity of serving her superiors in rank for the sake of maintenance, it signified very little what mode of servitude were applied to.

There was also another consideration which weighed not a little with the Countess, in almost insisting upon Miss Primrose's adopting the musical profession. Her ladyship was a distinguished patroness, and a most excellent judge of musical talent ; and there was a rival patroness who had never yet been able to produce, under her auspices, anything at all equal to Penelope Primrose. The mortification or defeat of a rival is a matter of great moment to minds of every description. Whenever there is the weakness of rivalry there must be of necessity also the vanity of triumph, and to that occasionally much will be sacrificed.

Mrs Greendale, who was present at this discussion, sided most cordially with the Countess ;

but had the proposal come from any other quarter, in all human probability it would have been resented as an indignity. Penelope was also well aware that it was absolutely necessary that she should leave the asylum in which so many of her few days had been spent, and she therefore, with as good a grace as her feelings permitted, gave assent to the proposal which the Countess had made. And thereby her generous patroness was softened.

The discussion of this question occupied no inconsiderable portion of time, though we have not thought it necessary to repeat at length the very common-place dialogue which passed on the subject. Our readers must have very languid imaginations if they cannot supply the omission for themselves. Suffice it to say, that the arguments used by the Countess of Smatterton were much stronger than the objections which arose in the mind of Penelope Primrose; and the consideration of these arguments, backed by the reflection that she had no other immediately

available resource, determined the dependent one to acquiesce in that which her soul abhorred. It was all very true, as the amiable Countess observed, that an occupation which introduced the person so employed to the notice and into the saloons of the nobility, could not be essentially degrading; it was also very true that there could be no moral objection to a profession which had been ornamented by some of the purest and most virtuous characters. All this was very true; but notwithstanding this and much more than this which was urged by the Countess, still Penelope did not like it. There is no accounting for tastes.

Some young ladies there are who think that, if they should be situated as Penelope was, they would not suffer any inducement to lead them to a compliance with such a proposal. They imagine that no earthly consideration whatever should compel them to that which they abhorred or disapproved. They cannot think that Penelope deserved the title of heroine, if she could thus

easily surrender her judgment and bend her will to the dictation of a patroness. But let these young ladies be informed, that in this compliance lay no small portion of the heroism of Penelope's character. She gained a victory over herself; she did not gratify a pert self-will at the expense of propriety and decorum, and she had no inclination to play the part of a Quixote.

It is an easy thing for a young man to set himself up as independent. The world with all its various occupations is before him. He may engage in as many freaks as suit his fancy; he may dwell and live where and how he pleases; but the case is widely different with a young woman delicately brought up, respectably connected, and desirous of retaining a respectable condition and the countenance of her friends. She is truly dependent, and must oftentimes sacrifice her judgment and feelings to avoid more serious and important sacrifices.

Penelope used to talk about dependence

while under the roof of her benevolent and kind-hearted relative, now no more. But she felt it not then, as she felt it when her uncle had departed from life. Then it was merely a name, now it became a reality.

When the Countess had prevailed upon Penelope to give her assent to the proposal of publicly displaying her musical talents, her ladyship was in exceeding good humour; and when a lady of high rank is in good humour, her condescension, her affability, her wit, her wisdom, and whatever she pleases to assume or affect of the agreeable and praiseworthy, are infinitely above all language of commendation to such a person as Mrs Greendale. The widow therefore was quite charmed with the exquisitely lady-like manners of the Countess, astonished at her great good sense; and, had the Countess requested it, Mrs Greendale herself would have become a public singer.

While this negotiation was going on at the castle at Smatterton, another discussion con-

cerning Penelope was passing at the rectory at Neverden.

“Well, papa,” said Miss Darnley, “I took particular notice of Penelope Primrose yesterday, and purposely mentioned the name of Lord Spoonbill, to see whether it would produce any emotion, and I did not observe anything that led me to suppose what you suspect.”

“Very likely, my child, you could not discern it. That was not a time for the expression of any such feelings. Her thoughts were then otherwise engaged. But I can say that, from what I have observed, I have no reason whatever to doubt that her affections are not as they were with respect to your brother. You know that Robert wrote to her by the same conveyance which brought us a letter, and although I gave every opportunity and hint I could to that purpose, Miss Primrose did not mention having heard.”

“But, my dear papa,” replied Miss Darnley, still unwilling to think unfavourably of so valued

a friend as Penelope, “might not her thoughts be otherwise engaged at the time, when you visited her; for you recollect that your call was much sooner after Dr Greendale’s death than our’s was.”

Mr Darnley smiled with a look of incredulity, and said, “You are very charitable in your judgment, my dear, but I think in this instance you extend your candour rather too far. I did not only observe symptoms of alienation, but had, I tell you, almost a proof of the fact. I went so far as to allude to her engagement and to offer our house as an asylum; and her reply was, that she would be at the direction of Lady Smatterton. Whether she be vain and conceited enough to aspire to Lord Spoonbill’s hand, I will not pretend to say, but I am abundantly convinced that she does not regard your brother with the same affection that she did some time ago; and there certainly have been symptoms to that effect in the course of her correspondence, or Robert would never have used such language,

or made such enquiries as he has in his last letter. And I think it would be but an act of kindness, or even of justice, to let your brother know what are our suspicions."

Now Mary Darnley, who was rather inclined to be blue-stockingish, and had of course, a mighty admiration for wisdom, and learning, and science, thought it not unlikely that if Penelope had changed her mind, and transferred her affections to another, that other was more likely to be Mr Kipperson than Lord Spoonbill. For, she reasoned, it was not probable that a young woman so brought up as Penelope had been, should be at all pleased with a character so profligate as Lord Spoonbill was generally supposed to be. Then Mr Kipperson, though he was double Penelope's age, yet was a very agreeable man, and far superior to the common run of farmers; and he was a man of very extensive information and of great reading. The reasoning then went on very consequentially to prove, that as Penelope loved reading, and as

Mr Kipperson loved reading, therefore Penelope must love Mr Kipperson. This perhaps was not the best kind of reasoning in the world, yet it might do in default of a better to support a theory.

The truth of the matter is, that Miss Mary Darnley herself was a little disposed to admire Mr Kipperson, in virtue of his literary and scientific character; and the truth also is, that Mr Kipperson had really manifested symptoms of admiration towards Penelope Primrose; and last, but not least, is the truth, that Miss Mary Darnley was somewhat inclined to be jealous of the attention which the literary and scientific Mr Kipperson had recently paid to Miss Primrose.

This theory of Miss Mary Darnley seemed the most plausible, and it was therefore adopted by her mother and sisters, and by them it was unanimously concluded that Penelope was not unfavourable to the suit of Mr Kipperson; and then they thought that the young lady had

behaved, or was behaving very ill to their brother ; and then they thought that their brother might do much better for himself ; and then they thought that Mr Kipperson was at least fifty, though till then it had been the common opinion that he was but forty ; and then they thought that no dependence could be placed on any one ; and then they made many wise remarks on the unexpectedness of human events, not considering that the experience of millions, and the events of centuries, have conspired to shew that events take any other direction than that which is expected. Ann Darnley was sorry for it, Martha laughed at it, and Mary was angry with it.

As for Mr Darnley himself, he was not much moved ; but he could not admit of the idea that he was wrong in his conjecture that Miss Primrose was partial to Lord Spoonbill, therefore he could not see the force of the reasoning which went to prove, that the transfer of Penelope's affections was not from Robert Darnley to Lord Spoonbill, but to Mr Kipperson.

“Beside,” said Mr Darnley, “is it likely that a young woman of such high notions as Miss Primrose should think of accepting an offer from Mr Kipperson, who, though he is a man of property and of literary taste, is still but a farmer, or agriculturist. It is far more likely that the vanity of the young lady should fix her hopes on Lord Spoonbill, especially if his lordship has paid her, as is not unlikely, very marked attentions.

Although in the family at the rectory of Neverden there was diversity of opinion as to the person on whom Miss Primrose had placed her affections, there was at least unanimity in the feeling and expression of disapprobation. And, in pursuance of this feeling, there was a diminution, and indeed nearly a cessation of intercourse between the parties. Many days passed away, and no message and no visitor from Neverden arrived at Smatterton.

This was deeply and painfully felt by Penelope, and the more so as it was absolutely impossible

for her to ask an explanation. Indeed, she concluded that no explanation was wanting; the fact that no letter had been received for so long time, and the circumstance of the coldness and change in the manners of the young ladies at Neverden, were sufficient manifestations to Penelope that, for some cause or other, there was a change in the mind of Robert Darnley towards her. Then in addition to these things was the reflection, that she had allowed herself to be persuaded contrary to her own judgment to adopt the profession of music as a public singer, or at least as a hired performer. Thus, in a very short time, she was plunged from the height of hope to the depth of despair. A little while ago she had been taught to entertain expectations of her father's return to England in a state of independence; she had also reason to hope that, the lapse of a few months, there might come from a distant land one for whom she did entertain a high esteem, and who should become her guardian,

and guide, and companion through life. A little while ago also, she had in the society and sympathy of her worthy and benevolent uncle, Dr Greendale, a refuge from the storms of life, and some consolation to enable her to bear up aright under the pressure of life's evils, its doubts and its fears. All these hopes were now vanished and dispersed, and she left to the mercy of a rude world. Her best benefactor was in his grave, and those very agreeable and pleasant companions in whom he confided as in relatives, and more than sisters, they also had deserted her. It required a great effort of mind to bear up under these calamities. Her mind however had been habituated to exertion, and it had gained strength from the efforts which it had formerly made; but still her constitution was not stoical; she had strong and deep feelings. It was with some considerable effort that she did not yield so far to the pressure of present circumstances as to lose all elasticity of mind

and to relinquish all love of life. And pity itself need not seek and cannot find an object more worthy of its tears than one living, who has lost all relish for life, and ceased to enjoy its brightness or to dread its darkness.

CHAPTER X.

SOME few weeks after Penelope had given her consent to the arrangement suggested by the Countess of Smatterton, the family at the castle took their departure for London. Her ladyship did not forget her promise of providing Miss Primrose with the means of cultivating and improving her natural talents; but, in a very few days after arriving in town, negociations were entered into and concluded with an eminent professor to take under his tuition a young lady patronized by the Countess of Smatterton.

Great compliments of course were paid to the judgment of the Countess, and high expectations were raised of the skill and power of this new

vocal prodigy ; for countesses never patronize anything but prodigies, and if the objects of their patronage be not prodigies by nature, they are very soon made so by art and fashion.

Now the Countess of Smatterton was really a good judge of musical excellence ; her taste was natural, not acquired or affected as a medium of notoriety, or a stimulus for languid interest in life's movements. And when her ladyship had a musical party, which was indeed not unfrequently, there was not one individual of the whole assemblage more really and truly delighted with the performances than herself, and few perhaps were better able to appreciate their excellence.

At this time but few families were in town, and the winter assortment of lions, and prodigies, and rages, was not formed or arranged. Lady Smatterton would have been best pleased to have burst upon the assembled and astonished world at once with her new human toy. But the good lady was impatient. She wished to

enjoy as soon as possible the pleasure of exhibiting to her friends and neighbours and rivals the wonderful talents of Penelope Primrose. As soon therefore as arrangements could be made with the professor who was destined to be the instructor of Miss Primrose, a letter was despatched to Smatterton, desiring the young lady to make as much haste as possible to town.

This was indeed a sad and painful trial to Penelope. Little did she think that the plan was so soon to be put in force to which she had given her reluctant assent. It seemed inconsiderate in her ladyship to remove Penelope from Mrs Greendale so very soon; not that the young lady had any very great reluctance to part from Mrs Greendale; but as she had some reluctance to make the journey to London for the object which was in view, she felt rather more than otherwise she would have done the inconvenience to which it necessarily put her aunt. Having therefore shewn Lady Smatterton's letter to the widow, she expressed her concern that the

Countess should be so very hasty in removing her, and said, that if her aunt wished it she would take the liberty of writing to her ladyship, requesting a little longer indulgence, that she might render any assistance which might be needed under present circumstances.

Some persons there are who never will and who never can be pleased: Mrs Greendale was one of them. Instead of thanking Penelope for her considerate and kind proposal, her answer was :

“ Indeed, Miss Primrose, I think you would be acting very improperly to question Lady Smatterton’s commands. I know not who is to provide for you, if you thus turn your back upon your best friends. I can assure you I have no great need of any of your assistance, which I dare say you would not be so ready to offer if it did not suit your own convenience.”

To repeat much such language as this would be wearisome. Suffice it to say, that there was no form of expression which Penelope could use,

nor any line of conduct which she could propose, which Mrs Greendale was not ingenious enough to carp at and object to. It may then be easily imagined that the situation of our heroine was not much to be envied ; nor will it be supposed that she felt any great reluctance to leave such a companion and friend as this. With the best grace imaginable, therefore, did Penelope prepare for yielding obedience to Lady Smatterton's commands ; but it was still with a heavy heart that she made preparation for her journey.

Before her departure it was absolutely and indispensably necessary that she should go through the ceremony of taking leave of her friends. Of several persons, whose names are not here recorded, Penelope Primrose took leave, with expressions of mutual regret. There was however no embarrassment and no difficulty in these cases. When, however, she prepared to take leave of her friends at Neverden, the case was widely different. Then arose much perplexity, and then her heart felt such a bitter

pang. It was probable that this would be a final leave. The Darnleys never visited London, or at least not above once in twenty years. They had recently looked coldly upon her, and had partially neglected her. It was contrary to their general practice to act capriciously; there certainly must be a motive for their behaviour, and what could that motive be but a change in the intentions of Robert Darnley with respect to herself. The ground of that change she was at a loss to determine. At all events she must call and take leave of them.

In pursuance of this determination, Penelope Primrose took, not the earliest, but the latest opportunity of calling upon Mr Darnley and the family at Neverden rectory; for it would not be very pleasant to remain any time in the neighbourhood after a cool and unfriendly separation from those with whom so many of her pleasantest hours had been spent, and with whose idea so many of her hopes had been blended. When she called, the whole family was at home. Her

reception was by no means decidedly unkind, or artificially polite. There was always indeed a degree of stateliness in the manner of Mr Darnley, and that stateliness did not appear any less than usual, nor did it appear quite so tolerable as on former days and on former occasions.

In the young ladies, notwithstanding their general good sense and most excellent education, there was towards Penelope that kind of look, tone, and address, which is so frequently adopted towards those who once were equals, and whom misfortune has made inferiors. Those of our readers who cannot understand us here we sincerely congratulate.

It had been made known to Mr Darnley for what purpose Miss Primrose was making preparations for a journey to London. But, though the fact had been communicated, the reason for that step had not been mentioned; not a word had been said concerning the pressing impertunity of the Countess; nor was there any notice

taken to him of the reluctance with which Penelope had consented to this arrangement. It appeared therefore to Mr Darnley that the measure was quite in unison with the young lady's own wishes; nor did he see how incongruous such a movement as this must be with his suspicions of the aspiring views of his late friend's niece. At all events, this proceeding on the part of Miss Primrose appeared to him, and very naturally so, as a tacit relinquishment of the engagement with his son: as it was impossible for her not to know how repugnant it must be to the feelings and taste of Mr Robert Darnley. But as the elder Mr Darnley held the clerical office, of the sanctity and dignity of which he had very high ideas, he thought it but part of his duty to administer a word or two of exhortation to the young lady about to embark in a concern of such a peculiar nature.

Now to render exhortation palatable, or even tolerable, requires a very considerable share of address and dexterity, more indeed than usually

falls to the lot of clerical or of laical gentry. It is easy enough to utter most majestically and authoritatively a mass of common places concerning the dangers to which young people are exposed in the world. It is easy to say, "Now let me advise you always to be upon your guard against the allurements of the world, and to conduct yourself circumspectly, and be very, very attentive to all the proper decorums and duties of your station." Such talk as this anybody may utter; and when young people commence life, they expect to hear such talk; and for the most part, to say the best of it, it produces no effect, good, bad, or indifferent. It is also easy to render exhortation painful and distressing, by making it assume the form of something humiliating and reproachful; and when it has also a reference to some departed friend, or to circumstances once bright, but now gloomy, and when these references are founded on injustice, and when this injustice cannot be refuted or rectified without some explanation or explanations more

painful still, then it is that exhortation is doubly painful and distressing. So fell upon the ear and heart of poor Penelope the exhorting language of Mr Darnley.

When Penelope had first entered the apartment she had announced the purpose of her call, and had, by the assistance of the Darnleys, stated the views with which she was going to London : for so reluctant was she to mention the fact, that its annunciation was almost extorted from her by those who knew beforehand what were her intentions. After a very little and very cold common-place talk, uttered merely from a feeling of the necessity of saying something, the conversation dropped, and the parties looked awkwardly at one another. Then did Mr Darnley, assuming a right reverend look, address himself to Miss Primrose.

“ Now, Miss Primrose, before we part, let me as your friend, and as a friend of your late uncle, give you a little parting advice. I am sorry that you have determined on taking this

step, and had you condescended to consult me on the subject, I certainly should have dissuaded you from the undertaking. But, however, that is past. Though I rather am surprised, I must acknowledge that, recollecting as you must, how strongly your late worthy uncle used to speak against this pursuit, you should so soon after his decease resolve to engage in it. But, however, you are perfectly independent, and have a right to do as you please. I do not say that in this pursuit there is anything inconsistent with religion and morality. I would by no means be so uncharitable. But I should have thought, Miss Primrose, that, considering your high spirit, you would hardly have condescended to such an employment; for I may call it condescension, when I consider the prospects to which you were born: but those, I am sorry to say, are gone. As you have then fully resolved upon thus making a public display of your musical talents, which, for anything I know to the contrary, may be of the highest order—for I do not understand music

myself—you will perhaps excuse me if, as a friend of your late uncle, and really a well-wisher to yourself, I just take the liberty to caution you against the snares by which you are surrounded. Beware of the intoxications of flattery, and do not be unduly distressed if you should occasionally in the public journals be made the subject of ill-natured criticism. For I understand there are many young and inexperienced writers who almost regularly assail by severe criticism public performers of every kind; and they make use of very authoritative language. Now this kind of criticism would be very offensive to a person who was not aware that it is the production of ignorant, conceited boys. I was once acquainted with a young man who made acknowledgments to me that have given me a very different view of the critical art from that which I formerly entertained. But, my good young lady, there are severer trials which await you than these: you will be very much exposed to the society of the vicious and dissipated. You will have need of all your caution and circumspection

to take care that your religious and moral principles be not weakened or impaired. I do not say, indeed, that your profession is to be esteemed irreligious or immoral; but it certainly is exposed to many snares, and does require an unusual share of attention. I hope you will not neglect to attend church regularly and punctually. It will assuredly be noticed if you neglect this duty. Many will keep you in countenance should you be disposed to slight the public ordinances of religion; but there are also not a few who patronize public musical performances, and who also attend on religious worship: it is desirable therefore to let these persons see that you are also attentive to the duties of religion. I must add, Miss Primrose, that I am concerned to find you so bent upon this scheme. It would have given me great pleasure, had all things proceeded rightly, to afford you an asylum in this house till the return of your father, or till any other change had rendered such accommodation no longer necessary. But, as circumstances now are, this cannot be."

It is easy to conceive what effect such language as this must have had on the sensitive mind and almost broken heart of Penelope Primrose. It is very true that, in this address to her, Mr Darnley had no malicious or cruel intention, though every sentence which he uttered grieved her to the very soul. Well was it for Penelope that she was partly prepared for something of this kind, and that her sorrows had crept upon her gradually. Therefore she bore all this with a most enduring patience, and never attempted to make any explanation or apology otherwise than by meekly and calmly replying to the elaborate harangue of Mr Darnley :

“ I thank you, sir, for your advice ; I hope and trust I shall attend to it ; but I wish you to understand that I am not acting purely according to my own inclinations in adopting this employment. I am sorry that I am under the necessity—”

The sentence was unfinished, and the tone in which it was uttered excited Mr Darnley's com-

passion: but he thought it very strange that Miss Primrose should express any reluctance to engage in a pursuit which, according to all appearance, she had voluntarily and unnecessarily adopted. The young ladies also were very sorry for her, but still they could not help blaming her mentally for her fickleness towards their brother; for they were sure that he was attached to her, and they plainly saw, or at least thought they saw, that she had withdrawn her affections from him. Penelope also was very well convinced, by this interview with the family, that all her hopes of Robert Darnley were gone.

To avoid any farther unpleasantness, she then took leave of her late friends, and, with a very heavy heart, returned to Smatterton to make immediate preparation for her journey to London. Alas! poor girl, she was not in a frame of mind favourable to the purposes of festivity or the notes of gladness. She, in whose heart was no gladness, was expected to be the means of delighting others. Thus does it happen, that the tears of one are the

smiles of another, and the pleasures of mankind are founded in each others pains. Never do the burning words and breathing thoughts of poetry spring with such powerful energy and sympathy-commanding force, as when they come from a heart that has felt the bitterness of grief, and that has been agitated even unto bursting.

Our heroine would then have appeared to the greatest advantage, and would then have commanded the deepest sympathy in those moments of solitude, which intervened between the last leave-taking and her departure for a metropolis of which she had seen nothing, heard much, and thought little. But now her mind was on the rack of thought, and so deeply and painfully was it impressed, that her feeling was of the absolute impossibility of effectually answering the designs and intentions of her friend the Countess. She could not bear to look back to the days that were past—she felt an indescribable reluctance to look forward, but her mind was of necessity forced in that direction. All that spirit of independence

and feeling of almost pride, which formed no small part of her character, seemed now to have taken flight, and to have left her a humble, destitute, helpless creature. It was a pretty conceit that came into her head, and though it was sorrowful she smiled at it; for she thought that her end would be swanlike, and that her first song would be her last, with which she should expire while its notes were trembling on her lips.

CHAPTER XI.

IT was not very considerate of the Countess of Smatterton to let a young lady like Penelope Primrose take a long and solitary journey of two hundred miles in a stage-coach without any guide, companion, or protector. The Earl had a very ample supply of travelling apparatus, and it would have been quite as easy to have found room for Penelope in one of the carriages when the family travelled up to town. But they who do not suffer inconveniences themselves, can hardly be brought to think that others may. Penelope felt rather mortified at this neglect, and it was well for her that she did, as it was the means of taking away her attention from more

serious but remoter evil. It was also productive of another advantage ; for it gave Mr Kipperson an opportunity of exhibiting his gallantry and politeness. For, the very morning before Penelope was to leave Smatterton, Mr Kipperson called in person on the young lady, and stated that imperious business would compel him to visit the metropolis, and he should have infinite pleasure in accompanying Miss Primrose on her journey, and perhaps that might be more agreeable to her than travelling alone or with total strangers. Penelope could not but acknowledge herself highly obliged by Mr Kipperson's politeness, nor did she, with any affectation or foolery, decline what she might perhaps be compelled to accept. On the following morning, therefore, Miss Primrose, escorted by Mr Kipperson, left the sweet village of Smatterton. That place had been a home to Penelope from almost her earliest recollections, and all her associations and thoughts were connected with that place, and with its little neighbour Neverden. Two hundred miles tra-

velling in a stage-coach is a serious business to one who has hardly ever travelled but about as many yards. It is also a very tedious affair even to those who are accustomed to long journies by such conveyance. In the present instance, however, the journey did not appear too long to either of our travellers. For Penelope had looked forward to the commencement of her journey with too much repugnance to have any very great desire for its completion, and Mr Kipperson was too happy in the company of Miss Primrose to wish the wheels of time, or of the coach, to put themselves to the inconvenience of rolling more rapidly than usual on his account. It was also an additional happiness to Mr Kipperson that there were in the coach with him two fellow travellers who had long heard of his fame, but had never before seen his person; and when they discovered that they were in company with the great agriculturist, and the great universal knowledge promoter, Mr Kipperson, they manifested

no small symptoms of satisfaction and admiration.

Now the mind of the scientific agriculturist was so constructed as to experience peculiar pleasure and delight at aught which came to his ear in the form of compliment and admiration. And, when Mr Kipperson was pleased, he was in general very eloquent and communicative ; and he informed his fellow travellers that he was now hastening up to London on business of the utmost importance. He had received despatches from town, calling him up to attend the House of Commons, and to consult with, or rather to advise, certain committees connected with the agricultural interest. And he, the said Mr Kipperson, certainly could not decline any call which the deeply vital interests of agriculture might make upon him. Thereupon he proceeded to shew that there was no one individual in the kingdom uniting in himself those rare combinations of talent, which were the blessing and distinction

of the celebrated Mr Kipperson of Smatterton; and that if he should not pay attention to the bill then before the House, or at least likely to be before the House, by the time he should arrive in London, the agricultural interest must be completely ruined; there could be no remunerating price, and then the farmers would throw up their farms and leave the country, taking with them all their implements, skill, forethought, and penetration; and then all the land would be out of cultivation, and the kingdom would be but one vast common, only maintaining, and that very scantily, donkeys and geese.

When the safety of a nation depends upon one individual, that individual feels himself very naturally of great importance. But perhaps this is a circumstance not happening quite so often as is imagined. Strange indeed must it be that, if out of a population of ten or twelve millions, only one or two can be found on whose wisdom the state can rely, or from whose councils it can receive benefit. But as the pleasure of imagining

one's self to be of importance is very great, that pleasure is very liberally indulged in. And thus the number of those rarities, called "the only men in the world," is considerably increased. Now Mr Kipperson was the only man in the world who had sagacity and penetration enough to know wherein consisted the true interest of agriculture; and he was most happy in giving his time and talents to the sacred cause of high prices. Enough of this: we do not like to be panegyrical, and it is very probable that our readers will not be much disappointed if we protest that it is not our intention to enter very deeply into the subject of political economy. Indeed were we to enter very deeply into the subject with which Mr Kipperson was intimate, we should be under the necessity of making an encyclopedia, or of plundering those already made, beyond the forbearance of their proprietors.

That must be an exceedingly pleasant mode of travelling which does not once, during a very

long journey, provoke the traveller to wish himself at his journey's end. Pleased as was Mr Kipperson at the opportunity afforded him of behaving politely to Miss Primrose, and gratified as he was by the respectful veneration with which his two other fellow travellers received the enunciations of his oracular wisdom; fearful as was Penelope that her new life would be the death of her, and mourning as she was under the actual loss of one most excellent friend, and contemplating the possible loss of others, still both were pleased to be at their journey's end.

It would have given Mr Kipperson great pleasure to accompany Miss Primrose to the Earl of Smatterton's town residence; but it gave him much greater pleasure to be able to apologize for this apparent neglect, by saying that business of a most important nature demanded his immediate attendance in the city, and from thence to the House of Commons; but that he should have great pleasure in calling on the following morning

to make enquiries after his fellow traveller, and to pay his respects to his worthy and right honorable neighbour, Lord Smatterton. For although my Lord Smatterton was what the world calls a proud man, yet he did admit of freedom and a species of familiarity from some sort of people; and a little freedom with a great man goes a great way with a little man. Now Mr Kipperson was one of those persons to whom the Earl of Smatterton was most graciously condescending, and with good reason was he condescending; for this said Mr Kipperson, wishing to keep up the respectability of the farming profession, and though being much of a tenant, and a little of a landlord, but hoping in due time to be more of a landlord through an anticipated inheritance, he gave all his mind to impress upon his agricultural neighbours the importance of keeping up prices, and he paid no small sum for the farm which he tenanted under the Earl of Smatterton. It may be indeed said with some degree of truth, that he paid Lord Smatterton

exceedingly well for his condescension ; and as his lordship was not much exposed to Mr Kipperson's invasions in London, he bore them with great resignation and address when they did happen. The Countess also was condescending to Mr Kipperson, being very sensible of his value to the Smatterton estate ; so that the great and scientific agriculturist appeared to visit this noble family on terms of equality ; and it is a fact that he thought himself quite equal, if not rather superior, to the Smatterton nobleman. It was a pleasure to Mr Kipperson to enjoy this conceit ; and it did no one any injury, and it is a pity that he should be disturbed in the possession of the fancy.

The nobility do not act judiciously when they admit of any other token of distinction than actual rank. When once they adopt any fanciful distinction from fashion, or *ton*, or impudence, for they are nearly the same, the benefit of the civil distinction is at once renounced, and there

is no established immoveable barrier against innovation. A merchant, or the son of a merchant, may by means of an imperturbable self-conceit, or by force of commanding impudence, push himself up into the highest walks of life, and look down upon nobility. Though the biographer of a deceased statesman may express his lament that nobility does not admit talent *ad eundem*, yet there is danger lest nobility should hold its hereditary honors with too light a hand. Lord Smatterton indeed was not guilty of neglecting to preserve upon his own mind, or endeavouring to impress on the minds of others, a due and full sense of his own importance. Even to Mr Kipperson his familiarity was obviously condescension, though not so felt or regarded by Mr Kipperson himself. We will leave this gentleman for awhile to go and transact important business in the city, and we will attend upon Miss Primrose.

As soon as the poor girl had found her way to

the residence of the Countess of Smatterton, she was received by her ladyship with the greatest kindness.

“Now, my dear Miss Primrose, this is very good of you to come up to town so soon. But how did you come—you did not come all the way by yourself. Surely you did not travel by the stage coach?”

Penelope informed her ladyship concerning her fellow traveller, and expressed herself perfectly well satisfied with the mode of travelling which she had adopted.

“Well, that was fortunate; but really, if I had thought of it in time, you might have come with our family when we travelled up. But I am very glad you are come. You will be quite indispensable to us to-morrow evening. I am happy to see you looking so well, and how did you leave Mrs Greendale? Poor woman! Her loss is very great!”

Fortunately for Penelope, the Countess was not one of those unreasonable persons who ask ques-

tions for the sake of answers, but one of those, who are not a small number, who ask questions purely for the sake of asking them, and by way of shewing their own very great condescension in deigning to ask so particularly concerning what interests their inferiors. It is however not good policy that the models of politeness should, in their manifest heedlessness of answers to their questions, so decidedly testify to their own insincerity and heartlessness.

Penelope was glad to be liberated from the interview with her ladyship, and to enjoy for a while the solitude which her apartment afforded. An apartment had been provided for her reception in the town residence of the Earl of Smatterton; and though the ascent to it was rather laborious, yet it had the blessed comfort of affording to the troubled one an opportunity of sitting alone, and shedding a few tears, and communing with her own heart. There are some states of mind in which the sufferer feels most and greatest consolation in being left to the thoughts of solitude.

There was however even in solitude nothing pleasing for Penelope to meditate upon : but hope is an artist that draws its finest scenes upon the darkest ground. Amidst all the losses which she had experienced, and the pains which she had suffered, and the dreaded anticipations of evils yet to come, still Penelope could think that her father was yet living, and might perhaps soon make his appearance in England, and fulfil those promises of which she had often indirectly heard. It was painful to her that she could not form any idea of her father. She had always regarded him as an object of compassion ; for her uncle in the candour of his heart never uttered words of reproach against Mr Primrose ; but, when he spoke of him, called him his poor brother, his unfortunate kinsman, and he always seemed to regard him as a victim to others vices and not to his own. Penelope could not form an idea of a being more fatherly than Dr Greendale had always been to her ; and whenever her young ears caught the sound of sympathy or sorrow for her lot as

a poor fatherless child, she denied in her own heart the applicability of such language to herself. She knew that she had a father living abroad, but she felt that a father had died at home. When, however, upon this absent living father Penelope knew that her only hope and dependence could rest, then did she with more fixedness of mind direct her thoughts and prayers thitherward. It was some consolation to her that some little time must elapse before she could by any possibility make her appearance in public ; this would be some alleviation, and might perhaps produce some change. The language however which the Countess had used respecting to-morrow, seemed to indicate that some commencement of publicity was destined for her even at that early date. And this thought was a dark spot in the picture of hope. So all the bright expectations which mortals cherish, have in their foreground something harshly real and coarsely literal. Many hours however the poor deserted one did not meditate upon melancholy, or on

brighter scenes. The weariness which had resulted from her long journey, and the agitation of spirits which she had suffered, were too much for her strength, and she soon sank to the silence of repose. Happy was it for her that the outlines of her destiny were but faintly traced; she scarcely knew for what mode of public display her patroness had designed her; but she could and did hope for the best. In all her thoughts the image of Robert Darnley was not in her mind's eye for any length of time; it frequently made its appearance, and as frequently it was dismissed; not in anger—not, or scarcely, in sorrow, but in resignation and philosophy. She had endeavoured to wean her mind from the thought of a fickle lover, without having recourse to hatred, reproach or resentment. She exercised great diligence to cultivate a degree of indifference, and she so far deceived herself as to fancy that she had succeeded. Youth never so thoroughly deceives itself as when it says, "I don't care."

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER day dawned upon the multitudinous interests and emotions of humanity. To the mind which can spare time from the intensity of its own feelings, and the selfishness of its own concerns, to think of others—to think, not merely to talk morality and sentiment about them, but to realise the emotions and agitations of thoughts which harass the human breast, there is in the thought of a day dawning in a great city a deep and serious fulness of interest. The sun's first blush upon the mountains and woods and streams and spangled meadows, is poetical and pretty enough, but the same light beaming on the condensed and crowded habita-

tions of men, brings to the mind far other thoughts, and excites widely different emotions. It awakens misery from its dreams of bliss, and guilt from its dreams of innocence, poverty from its dreams of wealth, and despair from its dreams of hope. Anxiety begins anew its busy work in the breast of the needy parent, and gnawing hunger oft reminds the sufferer of the opening of another day. Bitter are the feelings which morning oftentimes brings to the sons and daughters of poverty; but not to them alone are confined the agonizing throbs of the heart. There is among the inmates of those proud mansions which seemed built for festivity alone, and tenanted by luxury and repose, many, many a bitter pang. There is the thought of keener anguish than any mere physical privation or suffering can inflict, there are pangs of heart for which language has no words, and fancy no figures, there are fears and dreads of which the humbler sufferers of life's ills have no conception. Not

enviable were the feelings of our heroine on the first morning in which she woke in the great city.

Then did she feel her truly desolate and destitute condition. She had been as a beautiful flower hanging on a slender film over the current of a river, that film had broken, and the flower had dropped upon the stream at the mercy of its waves. With the opening day there had been accustomed to enter into her mind thoughts of devotion and gratitude. These thoughts came, but not as usual. It seemed to her as though she had not been sufficiently thankful to her Creator for his blessings, and that they had been withheld. She would have prayed but she dared not, she would have wept but she could not. Her bodily fatigue was gone, but the weariness of mind was felt more strongly. She endeavoured to compose her scattered thoughts, but that was a task of no small difficulty. One of the greatest concerns of all,

however, was, that by this new arrangement she was placed out of all communication with her father; for the late Dr Greendale was the only person in England with whom Mr Primrose had any correspondence. It was even doubtful whether Mrs Greendale herself knew his address. These circumstances, therefore, though they might not break off his communication with England, would naturally produce a long and serious interruption to it. For her own part, it was out of her power to convey to her father any knowledge of her situation, so as to be able by his intervention to avoid that publicity which she so much dreaded.

Not long had her mind been thus painfully occupied, before she received a visit in her apartment from her friend Lady Smatterton: and as she was now totally dependent on her ladyship, she was desirous of conciliating her regards as much as possible; nor indeed was that a very difficult task. A little sense of

humility and feeling of obligation and submission to her ladyship's superior wisdom, would always ensure the Countess of Smatterton's good will. When, therefore, Penelope with great humility, and a look of gratification, expressed her thanks to her ladyship for her very kind attentions, the Countess being pleased to see that her condescension had made its impression, was in very high spirits, and became more gracious and condescending still.

“ My dear Miss Primrose, you look quite charmingly this morning. I am delighted to find that you have not experienced any inconvenience from the fatigue of your journey. I think you will be in most excellent voice this evening. Now, I expect a few select friends to-night; and some of them are amateurs, and I assure you I have promised them a treat, in which I know they will not be disappointed. I have all your favourite songs and duets, so you may make your selection in

the course of the morning; and I have a new harp which I wish you to try. I think you will like it."

With a very great effort to suppress a very deep sigh, Penelope replied: "I shall be most happy to use my best exertions to gratify your ladyship, but I fear that before so many persons who are total strangers to me, and without any previous scientific instruction, I may disappoint the expectations which your ladyship's kindness has excited."

"Oh dear no, my dear, I beg you will not entertain any such notion; we shall have a very small party indeed, and of the amateurs, I can assure you that there is not one that is half so well acquainted with the science of music as you are. It will be time enough for you to take lessons previously to your performance in public, and that not because you need musical instruction, but there are certain peculiarities which it is necessary that public performers should know."

Miss Primrose, knowing how much the Countess disliked objections to any of her own arrangements, submitted as resignedly as she could; but with a feeling that neither her bodily nor mental strength were equal to the task which awaited her. The visit of the Countess concluded with requesting Penelope to take her breakfast with the family, unless she preferred being quite alone. But Penelope found little pleasure in solitude, and therefore very readily accepted the invitation to take breakfast at the family table, where she very soon after made her appearance.

At this table there sat down the Earl and Countess of Smatterton and Lord Spoonbill. This was the usual party, and Penelope was received by them all three with so much kindness, and such genuine politeness of manner, that she felt herself no stranger. And they all asked very kindly after Mrs Greendale, and they all hoped that Miss Primrose had not suffered from the fatigue of the

journey ; and when Lord Spoonbill asked how Miss Primrose had travelled, and when he heard that she had travelled by the stage-coach in company with Mr Kipperson, he was astonished and grieved ; and he thought it a great pity that arrangements had not been previously made for accommodating the young lady in one of their carriages. The Earl also expressed himself much concerned at the same neglect. Alas, thought Penelope, what a multitude of words on trifles. How she had travelled was now nothing to her, but it was something to her when she thought for what purpose that journey had been made.

Lord Spoonbill, after a proper interval, and with a very becoming seriousness of manner, gently adverted to the death of Dr Greendale, and perceiving that it was a subject on which Penelope loved to dwell, notwithstanding the melancholy and painful associations connected with it, he proceeded to extol the virtues of her deceased relative, and to express his own

great obligations to the good man for the many valuable pieces of advice he had received from the late rector of Smatterton; he thought that it was a great pity that some of the doctor's sermons should not be given to the public, for they would undoubtedly be productive of good. Penelope was very well pleased, and indeed quite interested by the manner in which Lord Spoonbill condescended to speak of her departed relative; and she began to think that his lordship was not quite so great a coxcomb as she had once taken him to be. Gradually her mind recovered a little of its natural vivacity, and her looks resumed part of their wonted cheerfulness. She was comparatively easy and composed. Then did the young nobleman ingeniously, and without forced transition, turn the conversation to other topics, and he spoke much of the metropolis and its many magnificences; but with peculiar delicacy avoided saying anything of public concerts. Penelope

felt grateful for such kind and considerate attentions, and began to think that in the manners of the higher ranks there was something peculiarly fascinating which could render such a man as Lord Spoonbill not only tolerable but really agreeable. The Earl of Smatterton was also very courteous and kind to his guest, though he could not well avoid majestic manifestations of his kindness. He condescended to hope that Miss Primrose would find herself happy in the metropolis, and dwelt with much complacency on the opportunity she would enjoy of introduction to society; and he spake largely of the patronizing propensities of the Countess; he also mentioned other titled ladies, to whose saloons the young dependent might be admitted; and concluded a long harangue by saying, that on proper occasions she would be a welcome guest at his own house.

Now it happened that on the breakfast table there was lying a newspaper, which was occasionally taken up and laid down by one or other

of the noble family of Smatterton. Penelope was not a politician, but seeing the words "Ship News" printed in distinct and distantly visible characters, she felt some curiosity to read that same news, for she thought it possible that there might be in that article something deeply interesting to herself. It appeared however to her that it would be making herself rather too much at home to take up the paper; she endeavoured therefore as it lay to catch a glimpse of the intelligence. Lord Spoonbill observed the direction of her eyes, and very politely offered her the paper, which she thankfully accepted. Just as she was in the act of directing her eyes towards that part of the paper which contained the intelligence most important to her, something addressed to her by Lord Smatterton called her away from the page almost in the very moment that the name of Primrose caught her eye. And as Penelope laid down the paper on being spoken to by his lordship, Lord Spoonbill took it up again, and by some means or other it was no longer

visible. What she had seen was enough to excite strong feelings and to raise her hopes. She had a recollection of the word "arrived," and the name of "Primrose" among the list of passengers; at least so it seemed to her from the hasty glance which she had taken of the paper. This of course was quite sufficient to fill her mind with the most pleasing visions for the rest of the day: and hearing that Mr Kipperson might very probably be one of the party in the evening, and knowing that this gentleman was deeply versed in matters of business, it occurred to her that he might bring her some pleasing intelligence from the city touching the arrival of vessels from the East Indies, and the names of passengers. It is true, there might be one of the name of Primrose and still no relation of hers. But she might at least enjoy the hope as long as possible; and it would cheer her spirit amidst the darkness of reality.

The evening came, and with it the few select friends of the Countess of Smatterton, who were to compose her party. There were not many per-

sons in town at this time; but Penelope had never before seen anything bearing the slightest resemblance to a fashionable party, for she had never been at the Easter ball at the Mansion house, or at Bartholomew fair; to her therefore this very small select party looked like a very tumultuous and promiscuous multitude. Every face was strange to her, and as the apartments were splendidly lighted up, the drawing and music rooms opening into each other, and displaying by means of mirrors a deceiving appearance as to their real dimensions. Thus magnified and multiplied, they looked to her unpractised eye as awfully public as a great theatre. Part of the company was assembled before Penelope made her appearance. When therefore she entered the middle drawing-room, which was the apartment most usually occupied by the family, she was surprised at the sight of lighted apartments on both sides of this, and these apartments to her eye filled with elegant company. She was still more surprised at entering the room to find

that no one took the slightest notice of her in the way of courtesy, but that three or four young gentlemen who were standing together near a fireplace absolutely and immovably stared at her: and then, as soon as she caught sight of the Countess of Smatterton, she observed that her ladyship was engaged in conversation with a great, broad, coarse, overdressed female, who was talking very loud and looking very majestically. This stranger appeared like a very vulgar woman to our unfashionable heroine, but was in reality no less a personage than the Duchess of Steeple Bumstead. Her Grace put her glass to her eye, and contemplated by its means the face and figure of Penelope. The poor girl felt very uncomfortable and ill at ease being thus gazed at so unmercifully. As soon as her Grace had satisfied her curiosity she dropt her glass, and wheeled round and sailed away in another direction. The Countess of Smatterton then approached the confused and embarrassed dependent, and after giving her a good-humoured rebuke for making

her appearance in such very sable attire, told her that the Duchess of Steeple Bumstead was very desirous of hearing her sing.

Penelope saw by the nearest mirror that the aspect of her attire was dark indeed, but dark as it was it could not express the mourning which she felt for her great loss. She was by no means in a proper frame of mind for the enjoyment of society, or at all fit for anything that wore the aspect of festivity. She suffered herself to be led into the music-room by the Countess, and she made a most respectful curtesy to the Duchess of Steeple Bumstead, when she had the honor of being introduced to a personage of such elevated rank. But still Penelope could not help thinking that fashionable manners were not agreeable : for she recollected that her late uncle used to define politeness as being that kind of behaviour which was least calculated to give pain to others ; and yet Penelope felt more pain from the behaviour of the Duchess of Steeple Bumstead, and that of some of the whiskered boys in Lady Smatterton's

drawing room, than she would have felt from persons not so high in rank and so fashionable in manners. All that arose from her ignorance of ways of the world. Why did she take the opinion of her uncle as oracular in those matters of which he could not possibly know anything at all? A country clergyman, who studies books all his life-time, can know nothing of the world.

The Duchess was pleased to question Penelope on the subject of music, and was pleased to express her approbation of the good taste which the young lady displayed. By degrees the manners of her Grace appeared less repulsive, and Penelope felt herself more at her ease. There was standing by the pianoforte a young lady of mild, pleasing, and prepossessing countenance, to whom the Duchess addressed herself:

“ My dear Jemima, you will perhaps have the goodness to accompany Miss Primrose on the pianoforte to some song, if there be one there that our friend would like to sing.”

The young lady expressed great readiness to oblige the Duchess—and the leaves of many books were turned over. It was not difficult to find a song that Penelope was familiar with, but it was difficult to find one which did not bring by its language or its expression some association painful and distressing to her mind. The Duchess was very patient during the search, and at length a piece was selected. Miss Primrose had a style of singing peculiarly her own. It was not marked by any very strong singularity, but its decided character was expression: and she shone most in those songs which admit of what may be called the rhetoric of music. There was also a very considerable degree of emotion in her musical expression, and it required a skilful hand to accompany her. That requisite she now had. As her voice was full and deep, it was also searching, and those who were within its reach felt themselves as it were addressed by the singer. This style was truly commanding and attractive. The company gradually surrounded the performer,

and well for her she knew not till the song was finished, that any one was attending to her besides the Duchess of Steeple Bumstead and the Countess of Smatterton.

Very abundant and very sincere applause followed the music's close. But the music or the applause was too much for our heroine, and she nearly fainted; kind and prompt assistance soon recovered her, and thus she was saved from an immediate repetition of that which her hearers would gladly have heard again. There was much talk in the room as to, who is she? But few could answer the question. One impertinent coxcomb said "She looks too modest to be a woman of great fashion."

Just at this moment who should enter the room but Peter Kipperson, Esq.! Peter was in all his glory. He had been occupied during the whole of the day in business of the utmost importance. He had been consulted and had given his advice, and his advice had been taken. He now presented himself to Lady Smatterton's

party, in which were several members of parliament, and as these were mostly men of business, Peter was personally known to most of them, and he received and returned their salutations with great self-satisfaction. Peter was an active little man, and he was nimbly moving about the apartments in search of Miss Primrose; but before he could meet with her he encountered the Earl of Smatterton.

“Mr Kipperson,” said his lordship, “I am most happy to see you. Have you met your committee to-day in the city? Have you taken any farther steps in that business, of which you were speaking to me the other day at Smatterton? Really, Mr Kipperson, something must be done, it is becoming a very serious affair. Those merchants are very crafty, selfish people. We must put a stop to their encroachments before it is too late.”

“My lord,” replied Mr Kipperson, “I am very happy to have it in my power to assure you that the resolution which I suggested is adopted.

I was forced to use all my powers of persuasion. I said to them in so many words, ‘Gentlemen,’ says I, ‘Gentlemen, if you do not adopt this resolution, the nation is ruined, we shall have the country deluged with corn, and we shall of course be all starved.’”

“That was excellent, Mr Kipperson ; you have saved the nation. I see you have right views of the matter.”

Several members also of the lower house, who were present, expressed themselves to the same effect ; and it was very satisfactory to Mr Kipperson to think that he had so timely and wisely interfered with his prodigious wisdom to save the nation from being starved.

After many interruptions, the wise and learned agriculturist found his way to Penelope Primrose ; and in answer to her interrogations concerning what she thought she had seen in the papers of the morning, informed her that two or three of the Company’s ships had arrived, that in one of them there certainly was a passenger named Primrose.

By Mr Kipperson's answer to a few more interrogations, Penelope was nearly certain that this could be no other than her long lost father. The very possibility of such an event was agitating to her mind, and the increasing probability of it was too great for her weak spirits to bear. A thousand thoughts at once confusedly rushed into her mind. She knew not how to inform her father of her present situation. She was doubtful whether he was returning home dependent or independent. She supposed that he would in the first instance find his way to Smatterton, and then it must be some days before she could see him. These and many more like considerations entered into her mind, and their united influence was such as to harass and perplex her beyond measure. She was most happy when the evening party of the Countess had dispersed, and when she was left alone to meditation and to hope. Then she endeavoured to conjecture on the probability of being rescued from the publicity which so awfully and imminently threatened her,

and with these thoughts others also entered the mind, and none of them were of a nature to soothe or compose.

Suffice it to say, that these various agitating feelings, and this new life into which Penelope was so unexpectedly and so painfully thrown, conspired together to produce a serious illness.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE are few, perhaps, of our female readers who could have passed through what Penelope was compelled to suffer, without sinking under the weight of such an accumulation of distressing circumstances. The wonder is, that she bore up so long, rather than that she sunk at last.

It is with reluctance that we withdraw the attention of our readers from the bedside of the dependent sufferer. We can only state that the Countess was very assiduous in her attentions to her patient, that the best medical assistance was immediately procured, that Lord Spoonbill was very regular in his enquiries, and that the Earl of Smatterton desired that the young woman

might not want for anything that was useful or that might contribute to her comfort and recovery. He said so every morning.

It is now absolutely necessary that we violate two of the unities, viz. of time and place. We must violate the unity of time, by doing what time itself with all its power cannot do; we must go backwards; and we must also violate the unity of place, by transporting our readers to the island of St Helena. Their expatriation will be but short.

About the beginning of November, in the year 18—, two of the Company's ships touched at this island in their passage homeward. The crews and the passengers were not sorry to have such symptoms of home as this accidental meeting produced. Those of the passengers who were going to England for the last time, found in the word "last" a different charm from any which Dr Johnson attributes to it, in the last paper of the Rambler. It was a cheerful and animating feeling which pervaded their bosoms, a sentiment

joyous even to tears. The first enquiries of all were for news from England, and the post-office was an object of general attraction. There were to be seen there cheerful and disappointed countenances, but every one was too much occupied with his own thoughts to take any notice of others.

There came out of the office a middle-aged stout gentleman, reading with great seriousness and emotion a letter which he held open in his hands, and there passed him and entered into the office a younger man, a fine tall handsome man, who would naturally have excited any one's attention by the mere force of his appearance; but the middle-aged gentleman was too deeply engaged to notice him at the moment. In a few seconds the younger of the two came out of the office, not reading a letter, but holding one in his hand unopened; and looking upon that one more sadly than he would have done had it been accompanied with another. Presently he also opened his letter and read it, not cheerfully, not

sorrowfully, but anxiously and enquiringly. The letter was finished and returned to his pocket; and he endeavoured to look more cheerfully, but his efforts failed. He quickened his pace, and presently he overtook the middle-aged gentleman; and, as they were passengers in different ships, they looked at each other rather earnestly, and the elder greeted the younger. The young man returned the greeting readily, and, as well as he could, cheerfully. The elder stranger said, that he was going to see the place where Bonaparte was buried; the younger was going to the same place, but he called it the tomb of Napoleon. The elder did not quarrel about the expression, but took the young man's offered arm, and they walked very sociably together.

Very few words passed between them on their way to the place of their destination; and when they arrived there they both seemed to feel a little disappointment that there was not something more to gratify their curiosity, or to excite emotion. Place, considered in itself, has no

charm. The imagination must make the mystery all for itself, and that it may do absent as well as present. Nebuchadnezzar was not unreasonable when he desired that his wise men should tell him his dream, as well as the interpretation thereof: for if they really had wisdom from heaven for one purpose, they would as likely have wisdom for the other. So it is with place connected with the memory of the distinguished sons of mortality. The imagination can as well form the place to the mind's eye as it can fill the place when seen with these emotions and feelings, which we expect to be excited by such views.

The elder stranger turning to the younger, said, "What is your real opinion of Napoleon Bonaparte?"

"He was certainly a great man," was the safe and quiet answer. The elder did not make any immediate reply to this enunciation of opinion on the part of his young companion. The other therefore supposed, and very naturally, that the answer which he had given was not altogether

satisfactory. He proceeded, therefore, but still cautiously :—" He was a man of great ambition ; and he was also a disappointed man." All this seemed but the echo of everybody's opinion, let their view of the man's character otherwise be what it may. The elder stranger then spoke again :

" I do not think he was a great man. The word great is an epithet too comprehensive to be applicable to a disappointed man. To be a great man, it is necessary that there should be in the mind those powers and that forethought which will guard against frustration and disappointment. Greatness is not in place and in name, it is purely in the mind. I will grant you that Napoleon Bonaparte had great military powers—great legislative powers—great discernment of human character ; but he was not great over himself : he wanted power to guide his power. And let a man have all other powers and all other talent, if he have not the power of power and the talent of talent, he may be a distinguished, he

may be a notorious man, he may produce grand effects ; but he will not be a great man. True greatness is calm ; for it feels and guides its own power.”

The young man listened to this, and to more than this ; for the elder one was more voluble than we have represented him. He perhaps loved paradox ; many persons do ; and some love to listen to paradox, if it be agreeably uttered, and be not too obviously a determined contradiction of the common feelings and opinions of mankind. The young man then replied :

“ But Napoleon produced great changes in men’s minds, and great effects on the frame of civil society, and he has left many monuments of his wisdom.”

“ True,” replied the elder one : “ Napoleon, as you call him, has done much in the world, and perhaps more than any other individual in whose ambitious steps he seems to have trodden. But he was raised up by a wise Providence to teach humanity that it may grasp at what is beyond

its power. Alexander was a lesson merely to warriors; Cæsar to men of intrigue and aspiring talent; Bonaparte to men of consummate talent of almost every description; and if the world be not pestered with a hero till there shall rise a man of greater talents than Napoleon Bonaparte, it may rest in peace for many centuries."

"I never took that view of the subject," replied the young man. "There is however something in what you say. Still I cannot but think that Napoleon was a great man."

"According to your opinions of greatness, no doubt he was. But I have told you my ideas of greatness, and according to those he was not. Greatness requires consistency and uniformity; and it is not in a man of disappointed ambition that we look for those characters. It seems to be the ordinance of heaven, that all its blessings should not centre in one individual among created beings. Where it bestows wit, it does not always grant wisdom to direct it; where it gives power, it does not always bestow discretion to use that

power, of whatever quality it may be, according to the best possible principles. True greatness implies wisdom, and wisdom in man makes the most of and does the best with its means. Now I have at this moment a letter in my pocket from England, bringing me an account of a good, and, I think, great man. But he was nothing more than the humble rector of a small parish in the country. He was by no means a man of great genius; nor was he a man of great eloquence; but he was a man of great moral power. I will venture to affirm that, whatever were the moral capabilities of the parish over which he presided as pastor, he would call them forth to the utmost. It is owing to that man that I am now living, and comparatively happy. It is owing to me, perhaps,"——

Here the voice of the speaker was interrupted by the swelling of his bosom, and he passed his hand convulsively on his forehead and gave way to an agony of tears and sobs, which it would have been painful to witness in a younger person,

but which was quite distressing to see in one of such appearance and at such an age; for he seemed full fifty years of age, and had the appearance of a man of good understanding and gentlemanly manners. The young man took him by the hand and faintly uttered a few words of consolation, that he might a little abate a sorrow which he could not wholly stay.

When the violence of the emotion had a little subsided, and the sufferer had regained the power of speech, he first asked pardon for his weakness, and apologised for having given way to his feelings. "For," continued he, "I have lost a benefactor just at a moment when I was flattering myself that I should be able to thank him for his kindness, and to gratify him by letting him know that his kindness had not been in vain, and that his friendly admonitions had not all been lost. I will not so far encroach upon your patience as to tell you my history; but I cannot forbear from indulging in the pleasure which I mention—the conduct of this most excellent man towards me and my family."

“ I shall have great pleasure, sir,” replied the young man, “ in listening to any particulars with which you may be pleased to favour me. The history of the human mind is always interesting and always instructive.”

With this encouragement the elder stranger proceeded: “ This most excellent man, of whose death I have been speaking, was a clergyman, whose unfortunate sister I married more than twenty years ago. I respected and honored him when I first knew him for the purity and simplicity of his manners. He was of a respectable family, but not wealthy: his living was nearly his whole maintenance. I could never induce him to spend a week with us in town. He always pleaded his parochial duties as demanding his whole attention. It was in vain for me, or for any one else, to suggest any hint respecting preferment or bettering his circumstances by the ordinary means of professional advancement. During the whole of the time I resided in England after my marriage, I saw nothing of my respected brother-in-law. We had, it is true,

several letters from him, and letters of a most interesting description. Well would it have been for me, and well for my dear child, and well for my beloved companion, had I regarded these letters as something more than models of epistolary correspondence; had I attended to those kind paternal hints which they contained. They gave me admonition without assuming airs of superiority or the affectations of a would-be hermit. He wrote to me in the world, and as from the world, making allowances for all the temptations with which I was surrounded, and speaking of them as if he had not learned their existence or ascertained their nature merely by the means of books or talk. I was content with admiring the good man's virtues. I did not seek to imitate them. I suffered one scoundrel after another to creep into an intimacy with me, and in a very few years my patrimony was wasted, and all my inheritance was melted away at the gaming-table."

There was again, at these words, a pause of passionate and deep feeling, but it passed away, and the emotion subsided, and the narrator went on to say :

“ Then, sir, I became a widower. My beloved partner left me an only child, a daughter, for whom I resolved to live, or, more properly speaking, for whose sake I endeavoured to preserve and support life, which without this stimulus would have been a burden too heavy to be borne. I took my poor little innocent child to this venerable and amiable clergyman. I found even then nothing like reproach. The good man pitied me, and he pitied my child. His pity touched me more sorely and more deeply than any reproaches which human language could have uttered. I felt my heart melt within me. I dared not say a word of exculpation. I stood self-condemned. I proposed to leave my native land, and to seek elsewhere the means of maintenance for myself and my child. He offered to

take my little girl and be a father to her : and he has been so.

She, poor innocent, hardly knows that she has any other father. I am to her but as a name ; but I do long most ardently once more to see her. I think years have not so altered her that I shall not recognize her. I have pleased myself during my long exile of sixteen years with forming to myself an image of my dear child growing up to woman's estate ; and the miniature likeness of her dear mother assists my imagination now in forming an idea of my daughter. She is now expecting my return ; and the last letter which I received of my most excellent brother-in-law, informed me that the poor girl had bestowed her affections, and would with my approbation bestow her hand, on a worthy and respectable man. I left all these matters to my relative in England. I was sure that he would act towards my child as a parent, and as a wiser and more truly kind parent than I have been. I was happy till this hour in the thought that I was hastening home

to England to return my thanks to my benefactor, to see my dear child, and receive her at his hands—and now alas this happy, this blessed, prospect is blighted by the melancholy intelligence of this good man's death, and would to heaven that this were the worst—but the most painful intelligence is yet to be added. I am informed from the best authority that my poor dear child has been simple enough to be captivated by a young man of high rank, who is too vain to love any one but himself, and too proud to marry beneath his own rank. I am, therefore, likely to be greeted with sorrows and perplexities on my very return to England.”

The elder stranger sighed calmly; and as it were resignedly, when he had finished speaking. The younger one looked thoughtful and sighed also. A pause of some minutes' silence followed, and the young man said :

“ You must hope better things, sir ; a long absence from home should indeed always prepare us for something of change and calamity ; we

must look for those fluctuations of humanity : but still we may be permitted to hope, and to enjoy pleasing thoughts as long as possible."

" Yes, sir, your remarks are very true, but they are not so easily applied. Hope does not come and go at the command of reason, and the spirits do not rise and fall according to the dictates of the understanding, or by any force of ratiocination. I ought to apologise for troubling you, a stranger, with my sorrows ; they cannot be interesting to you ; but it is not easy when the heart is full to prevent it from overflowing."

" No apology, sir, is necessary : or, if it were, I might adopt the language of your apology, and use it as a preface to my tale of sorrow and disappointment awaiting me also at my return to my native land. I have also cause for grief."

" Indeed, one so young as you appear to be ! But yours, young man, are the sorrows, perhaps, of a youthful lover. Yours are not so deeply rooted as mine."

These words led to an explanation which told

the two strangers that their concerns were more nearly allied than they had been aware. Our readers of course need not be informed that the elder of the two was Mr Primrose, and the younger Mr Robert Darnley. They were happy, however, in the midst of their sorrows, to have become thus acquainted at a distance from home. They only regretted that the distance between their respective situations in India had formed an insuperable barrier against an acquaintance and intimacy there. The fact is that, so long as Dr Greendale considered the return of Mr Primrose as a matter of uncertainty, he had been very cautious of exciting his daughter's expectations. He had ventured to consider his own approbation quite sufficient to allow of the correspondence between his niece and Mr Robert Darnley, and had in his letters to Mr Primrose simply mentioned the fact without stating particulars, thinking that it would be time enough hereafter, should the mutual affection of the young persons for each other continue and

strengthen. Mr Primrose had, in reply to that information, left Dr Greendale quite at liberty to make such disposal of Penelope as he might think proper ; for the father was well aware that the uncle was, both by discretion and affection, well qualified for the guardianship of his child.

The vessels in which the two gentlemen sailed soon weighed anchor and put to sea again. So the friends were parted for a time ; nor did they hold any farther communication on the course of their voyage, for they had not left St Helena many days before the ship parted company in a gale of wind. That vessel in which Mr Primrose sailed first arrived in England, as we have already intimated.

CHAPTER XIV.

ENGLAND appeared to Mr Primrose quite a new world. He had sixteen years ago sailed down the river Thames, which presented on its banks at that time quite as much picturesque beauty as now. But he did not then observe these beauties. His heart was full of other thoughts, and his mind was moved by widely different feelings. There had not been in his soul the sentiment of moral beauty, nor was there in his heart that repose of pleasure which could admit of enjoying the external world in its manifestations of beauty or sublimity. But on his return homewards his thoughts were far different. He had left England in forlorn hope, but he was returning under

brighter auspices. He had sailed from his native land, bearing a deeply felt burden of self-reproach ; and though he could not forget or forgive his former self, and though still there were painful scenes to be witnessed, and melancholy information to be received, yet the aspect of things was widely different from what it had been at his departure. And he expressed himself delighted with all that he saw. The little boats and the lighter craft upon the river spoke of bustle and activity, and of human interest ; and in them he saw the flutterings of business and prosperity. Though it was winter, and the trees on the rising grounds were leafless, and the fields had lost their greenness, yet the very pattern and outline of what the scene had been in summer, and of what it would be again in spring, were all very charming to his eye, then active with imagination. His own bright thoughts gave verdure to the trees and greenness to the fields ; and he thought that England indeed was a blessed land. And as the vessel made her way up the river, and as at a

distance a dense black cloud was seen, he knew that that was a manifestation of their vicinity to the great city, and that dark mass of floating smoke, which rustic eloquence so glibly reproaches, was to his soul a great refreshment and a most pleasing sight.

As soon as he disembarked, he first directed his steps to the office of his agent in the city, to make enquiry respecting the speediest mode of arriving at Smatterton : for he knew not that his daughter's residence was now in London. There is a great contrast between the appearance of the banks of the Thames and the inside of a city counting-house ; but they are both very pleasant sights to those who are glad to see them. Mr Primrose was indeed very glad to see his native land, and to walk the streets of its busy metropolis ; and with very great cordiality did he shake hands with the principal in the office, and very politely did the principal congratulate him on his return to England. Mr Primrose did not notice the great contrast between his own joy-expanded

face and the business-looking aspect of the agent ; but he thought that all London looked as glad to see him as he was to see London. After transacting at the office of his agent such business as was immediately important, and without waiting to observe what changes and improvements had taken place in the great city since he had left it sixteen years ago, he made enquiry after the readiest and quickest mode of reaching Smatterton, and finding that the stage-coach was the most rapid conveyance, he immediately directed his steps thitherward.

There are in the course of human life many strange and singular coincidences. Now it happened that the very day on which Mr Primrose was preparing to start for Smatterton, Mr Kipperson also was going to travel the same road, and by the same conveyance. Little did the former imagine that he was going away from his daughter ; little did he think that, in his way to the White Horse cellar in Piccadilly, he had actually passed the house in which his beloved child and only

hope lay sick and ill. The days in December are very short; and it was nearly dark when, at four o'clock in the afternoon, Mr Primrose and Mr Kipperson, unknown to each other, took their seats in the coach. They had the inside of the coach to themselves.

Mr Primrose, as we have said, was in good spirits. He certainly had some cause for grief, and some source of concern; but the feeling of satisfaction was most prominent. He had shed tears to the memory of Dr Greendale, and he hoped that the worthy man had so instructed the dependent one committed to his care, that no permanent cause of uneasiness would be found in her. The intelligence which he had received respecting her alleged and supposed fickleness came from Mr Darnley, and the father, therefore, knowing Mr Darnley to be a very severe and rigid kind of man, and withal mighty positive, hoped that a premature judgment had been formed, and trusted that, when all was explained, all would be right. We must indeed do the father of

Penelope the justice to say that, with all his failings, he was sincere, candid, and downright. He never suffered any misunderstanding to exist where it could possibly be cleared up. He was plain and direct in all his conduct.

We need not say that Mr Kipperson was in good spirits. He always was so. He was so very happy that by this last journey to London he had saved the nation from being starved to death by a superabundance of corn. What a fine thing it is to be the cleverest man in the kingdom! What would become of us all were it not for such men as Mr Kipperson starting up about once in a century, or twice a-week, to rectify all the errors of all the rest of the world? And what is the use of all the world beside, but to admire the wisdom of such men as Mr Kipperson? Our only fear is that we may have too many such profoundly wise men; and the consequence of an over supply of wisdom would be to ruin the nation by folly.

Whether Mr Kipperson addressed Mr Prim-

rose, or Mr Primrose addressed Mr Kipperson, we know not ; but in a very short time they became mighty good friends. To some observation of Mr Primrose, his fellow traveller replied :

“ You have been abroad I suppose, sir ? ”

“ I have, sir,” said Mr Primrose ; “ and that for a long while : it is now upwards of sixteen years since I left England, and I am most happy to return to it. Many changes have taken place since I went abroad, and some, I hope, for the better.”

“ Many improvements have indeed been made in the course of that time. We have improved, for instance, in the rapidity with which we travel ; our roads are as smooth as a bowling-green. But our greatest improvements of all are our intellectual improvements. We have made wonderful strides in the march of intellect. England is now the first country in the world for all that relates to science and art. The cultivation of the understanding has advanced most astonishingly.

“ I remember noticing when I was in India,” said Mr Primrose, “ that the number of publications seemed much increased. But many of them appeared to be merely light reading.”

“ Very likely, sir ; but we have not merely light reading ; we have a most abundant supply of scientific publications : and these are read with the utmost avidity by all classes of people, especially by the lower classes. You have no doubt heard of the formation of the mechanics’ institutes ?”

“ I have, sir,” replied Mr Primrose ; “ but I am not quite aware of the precise nature of their constitution, or the object at which they aim. Perhaps you can inform me ?”

“ That I can, sir,” said Mr Kipperson ; “ and I shall have great pleasure in so doing ; for to tell you the truth I am a very zealous promoter of these institutions. The object of these institutions is to give an opportunity to artisans, who are employed all day in manual labour, to acquire a scientific knowledge, not only of the art by

which he lives and at which he works, but of everything else which can possibly be known or become a subject of human inquiry or interest."

"But surely," interrupted Mr Primrose, "it is not designed to convert mechanical into scientific men. That seems to my view rather a contradiction to the general order of things."

"I beg your pardon," replied the other; "you are repeating, I perceive, exploded objections. Is it possible, do you think, that a man should do his work worse for understanding something of the philosophy of it? Is it not far better, where it is practicable, that a man should act as a rational reflecting creature, than as a piece of mere machinery?"

"Very true, certainly, sir; you are right. Ay, ay, now I see: you instruct all artisans in the philosophy of their several employments. Most excellent. Then, I suppose, you teach architecture and read lectures on Vitruvius to journey-men bricklayers?"

“Nay, nay, sir,” replied Mr Kipperson, “we do not carry it quite so far as that.”

“Oh, I beg your pardon,” replied Mr Primrose, “I had not the slightest idea that this was carrying your system too far. It might, perhaps, be a little refinement on the scheme to suppose that you would teach tailors anatomy; but after all I do not see why you should start at carrying a matter of this kind too far. The poet says, ‘a little knowledge is a dangerous thing;’ and, for my own part, I can see no great liberality in this parsimonious and stinted mode of dealing out knowledge; for unless you teach the lower classes all that is to be taught, you make, or more properly speaking keep up, the distinction.”

Mr Kipperson was not best pleased with these remarks; he saw that his fellow-traveller was one of those narrow-minded aristocratic people, who are desirous of keeping the mass of the people in gross ignorance, in order that they may be the more easily governed and imposed upon. Though in good truth it has been said, that the

ignorant are not so easily governed as the enlightened. The ingenious and learned Mr Kipperson then replied :

“ You may say what you please, sir, in disparagement of the system of enlightening the public mind ; but surely you must allow that it is far better for a poor industrious mechanic to attend some lecture on a subject of science or philosophy, than to spend his evenings in drunkenness and intemperance.”

“ Indeed, sir, I have no wish to disparage the system of enlightening the public mind ; and I am quite of your opinion, that it is much more desirable that a labouring man”——

“ Operative, if you please,” said Mr Kipperson ; “ we have no labouring men.”

“ Well,” pursued Mr Primrose, “ operative ; the term used to be labouring or working when I was last in England : I will agree with you, sir, that it is really better that an operative should study philosophy, than that he should drink an inordinate quantity of beer. But do you find,

sir, that your system does absolutely and actually produce such effects?"

"Do we?" exclaimed Mr Kipperson triumphantly: "That we certainly and clearly do: it is clear to demonstration; for, since the establishment of mechanics' institutes, the excise has fallen off very considerably. And what can that deficiency be owing to, if it be not to the fact which I have stated, that the operatives find philosophy a far more agreeable recreation after labour than drinking strong beer?"

"You may be right, sir, and I have no doubt you are; but, as I have been so long out of England, it is not to be wondered at that my ideas have not been able to keep pace with the rapid strides which education has made in England during that time. I am very far from wishing to throw any objection or obstacle in the way of human improvement. You call these establishments 'mechanics' institutions:' but pray, sir, do you not allow any but mechanics to enjoy

the benefit of them? Now there is a very numerous class of men, and women too—for I should think that so enlightened an age would not exclude women from the acquisition of knowledge;—there is, I say, a very numerous class of men and women who have much leisure and little learning—I mean the servants of the nobility and gentry at the west end of the town. It would be charitable to instruct them also in the sciences. How pleasant it must be now for the coachman and footman, who are waiting at the door of a house for their master and mistress, at or after midnight, instead of sleeping on the carriage, or swearing and blaspheming as they too frequently do, to have a knowledge of astronomy, and study the movements of the planets. Is there no provision made for these poor people?”

“Certainly there is,” said Mr Kipperson. “There are cheap publications which treat of all the arts and sciences, so that for the small

charge of sixpence, a gentleman's coachman may, in the course of a fortnight, become acquainted with all the Newtonian theory."

Mr Primrose was delighted and astonished at what Mr Kipperson told him; he could hardly believe his senses; he began to imagine that he must himself be the most ignorant and uninformed person in his majesty's dominions.

"But tell me, sir," continued he, "if those persons, whose time and attention is of necessity so much occupied, are become so well informed; do others, who have greater leisure, keep pace with them; or, I should say, do they keep as much in the advance as their leisure and opportunity allow them? For, according to your account, the very poorest of the community are better instructed now than were the gentry when I lived in England."

"Education, sir," answered Mr Kipperson, with the tone of an oracle, "is altogether upon the advance. The science of instruction has reached a point of perfection, which was never

anticipated ; nay, I may say, we are astonished at ourselves. The time is now arrived when the only ignorant and uninformed persons are those who have had the misfortune to be educated at our public schools and universities : for in them there is no improvement. I have myself been witness of the most shocking and egregious ignorance in those men who call themselves masters of arts. They know nothing in the world about agriculture, architecture, botany, ship building, navigation, ornithology, political economy, ichthyology, zoology, or any of the ten thousand sciences with which all the rest of the world is intimate. I have actually heard an Oxford student, as he called himself, when looking over a manufactory at Birmingham, ask such questions as shewed that he was totally ignorant even of the very first rudiments of button-making."

"Astonishing ignorance," exclaimed Mr Primrose, who was rather sleepy; "I dare say they make it a rule to teach nothing but ignorance at the two universities."

“ I believe you are right, sir,” said Mr Kipper-son, rubbing his hands with cold and extacy ; “ those universities have been a dead weight on the country for centuries, but their inanity and weakness will be exposed, and the whole system exploded. There is not a common boys’ school in the kingdom which does not teach ten times more useful knowledge than both the universities put together, and all the public schools into the bargain. Why, sir, if you send a boy to school now, he does not spend, as he did formerly, ten or twelve years in learning the Latin grammar, but now he learns Latin and Greek, and French, German, Spanish, Italian, dancing, drawing, music, mapping, the use of the globes, chemistry, history, botany, mechanics, hydrostatics, hydraulics, hydrodynamics, astronomy, geology, gymnastics, architecture, engineering, ballooning, and many more useful and indispensable arts and sciences, so that he is fitted for any station in life, from a prime minister down to a shoe-black.”

Before this speech was finished, Mr Primrose

was fast asleep ; but short is the sleep in a coach that travels by night. The coach stopped and woke our foreigner from a frightful dream. We do not wish to terrify our readers, but we must relate the dream in consequence of its singularity. He dreamed then, that he was in the island of Laputa, and that having provoked the indignation of some of the learned professors by expressing a doubt as to the practicability of some of their schemes, he was sentenced to be buried alive under a pyramid of encyclopedias. Just as the cruel people were putting the sentence into execution, he woke and found his coat-collar almost in his mouth, and heard the word ‘ology’ from the lips of his fellow traveller. He was very glad to find that matters were no worse.

CHAPTER XV.

FEW indeed are the adventures now to be met with in travelling by a stage coach, and few also, comparatively speaking, the accidents. But our travellers were destined to meet both with accident and adventure. The coach, as our observant readers have noticed, must necessarily have travelled all night. The nights in December are long and dark; and not unfrequently, during the long cold silence of a December night, there gently falls upon the dank surface of the earth a protecting and embellishing fleece of flaky snow. And the morning snow as yet untrodden has a brilliant and even cheerful look beneath a blue

and brightly frosty sky; and when a wide expanse of country variegated with venerably-aged trees, and new enclosures and old open meadow lands, and adorned with here and there a mansion surrounded with its appurtenances of larch, pine, and poplar, and divided into unequal but gracefully undulating sections by means of a quiet stream—when a scene like this bursts upon the morning eye of a winter traveller, and shows itself set off and adorned with a mantle of virgin snow, it is indeed a sight well worth looking at. Mr Primrose had not seen snow for sixteen years, and the very sight of it warmed his heart; for it was so much like home. It was one of those natural peculiarities which distinguished the land of his birth from the land of his exile. He expressed to his fellow traveller the delight which he felt at the sight. Mr Kipperson coincided with him that the view was fine, and proposed that, as they were both well clad, and as the scenery was very magnificent, they should by

way of a little variety seat themselves on the outside of the coach. The proposal was readily embraced, and they mounted the roof.

The carriage was proceeding at a tolerably rapid pace on high but level ground; and the travellers enjoyed the brightness of the morning, and the beauty of the valley which lay on their left hand. Shortly they arrived at a steep descent which led into the valley beneath, and there was no slacking of pace or locking of wheels, which had been customary in going down hill when Mr Primrose was last in England. He expressed, therefore, his surprise at the boldness or carelessness of the coachman, and hinted that he was fearful lest some accident might happen. But Mr Kipperson immediately dissipated his fears, by telling him that this was the usual practice now, and that the construction of stage-coaches, and the art of driving, were so much improved, that it was now considered a far safer and better plan to proceed in the usual pace down hill as well as upon level ground. Mr Kip-

person, in short, had just proved to a demonstration that it was impossible that any accident could happen, when down fell one of the horses, and presently after down fell coach and all its company together.

Happily no lives were lost by the accident. But if Mr Kipperson's neck was not broken by the fall, his heart was almost broken by the flat contradiction which the prostrate carriage gave to his theory, and he lay as one bereft of life. Equally still and silent lay Mr Primrose; for he was under the awkward difficulty of either denying his fellow traveller's correctness or doubting the testimony of his own senses. The catastrophe took place near to a turnpike house; so that those of the passengers, who had experienced any injury from the overturning of the coach, could be speedily accommodated with all needful assistance. All the passengers, however, except Mr Primrose, were perfectly able, when the coach was put to rights again, to resume their journey. Mr Primrose, as soon as he re-

covered from the first shock of his fall, was very glad to take refuge in the turnpike house, and he soon became sensible that it would not be prudent for him then to pursue his journey. He had indeed received a severe shock from the accident, and though he had no bones broken he had suffered a violent concussion which might be doctored into an illness.

As soon as possible medical assistance was procured. The surgeon examined and interrogated the overturned gentleman with great diligence and sagacity. From the examination, it appeared not unlikely that the patient might promise himself the pleasure of a speedy removal. The truth of the matter was, that the poor gentleman was more frightened than hurt. Some cases there are, and this was one of them, in which no time should be lost in sending for the doctor, seeing that, if the doctor be not sent for immediately, he may not be wanted at all. This is one of the reasons why physicians keep carriages, and have their horses always in

readiness ; for by using great expedition they frequently manage to arrive before the patient recovers.

The surgeon who attended Mr Primrose thought proper to take some blood from his patient, and to supply the place of the same by as many draughts as could be conveniently taken, or be reasonably given in the time. It was also recommended that the gentleman should be put to bed.

The dwellings attached to turnpike gates are seldom so roomy and so abundantly provided with accommodation as to admit of an accidental visitor : but in the present case it so happened that there was an apartment unoccupied and not unfurnished. The gatekeeper's wife, who was a notable and motherly kind of woman, said, that if the gentleman could put up with a very small apartment, and a coarse but clean bed, he might be accommodated, and he need not fear that the bed was damp, for it had been occupied for the last month, and had only been vacated the day

before. Mr Primrose readily accepted the offer, not being very particular as to appearance.

“ I suppose,” said he, “ you keep a spare bed for the accommodation of those who may be overturned in coming down this hill ? Your surgeon, I find, does not live far off. That is a good contrivance. Pray can you tell me, within a dozen or two, how many broken bones the stage coach supplies him with in the course of the year ? ”

At this speech the good woman laughed, for it was uttered in such a tone as intimated that the gentleman wished it to be laughed at; and as he was a respectable looking man, and carried in his aspect a promise to pay, the worthy wife of the gate-keeper laughed with right good will.

“ Oh dear no, sir,” said she, “ there is not an accident happens here hardly ever. The coachman what overturned you this morning, is one of the most carefullest men in the world, only he had a new horse as didn’t know the road.”

“ A very great comfort is that,” said Mr Prim-

rose, and he smiled, and the gate-keeper's wife smiled, and she thought Mr Primrose a very funny man, that he should be able to joke when under the doctor's hands. There are some people who are very facetious when they are sick, provided the sickness be not very acute; for it looks like heroism to laugh amidst pain and trouble.

Mr Primrose then proceeded; "So you will assure me that the person who occupied your spare bed last, was not an overturned coach passenger?"

The poor woman did not smile at this observation, but on the contrary looked very grave, and her eyes seemed to be filling with tears, when she compressed her lips and shook her head mournfully. With some effort, after a momentary silence, she said:

"No, sir, it was not any one that was overturned; but it was a coach passenger. It was a young lady, poor dear soul! that seemed almost dying of a broken heart. But had not you better

go to bed, sir? The doctor said you wanted rest."

Mr Primrose was a nervous man, and tales of sorrow inartificially told frequently depressed him, and excited his sympathy with greater force than was consistent with poetical enjoyment. He therefore took the considerate advice which the good woman gave him, and retired to rest. To a person of such temperament as Mr Primrose, the very mention of a young lady almost dying of a broken heart was quite sufficient to set his imagination most painfully at work. Rapidly did his thoughts run over the various causes of broken hearts. Very angry did he become with those hardened ones, by whose follies and vices so many of the gentler sex suffer the acutest pangs of the spirit. He thought of his own dear and only child, and he almost wrought himself up to a fever by the imagination that some villanous coxcomb might have trifled with her affections, and have left her to the mockery of the world. He then thought of the

mother of his Penelope, and that she had died of a broken heart, and that his follies had brought her to an untimely grave. Then came there into his mind thoughts of retributive justice, and there was an indescribable apprehension in his soul that the sorrows which he had occasioned to another might fall also to his own lot. He wondered that there should be in the world so much cruelty, and such a wanton sporting with each others' sufferings. The powerful emotions which had been raised in his mind from the first hour that he embarked for England, were of a nature so mingled, and in their movements so rapid, that he hardly knew whether they were pleasurable or painful. There was so much pleasure in the pain, and so much pain in the pleasure, that his mind was rendered quite unsteady by a constant whirl and vortex of emotions. He felt a kind of childish vivacity and womanly sensibility. His tears and his smiles were equally involuntary; he had no power over them, and he had scarcely notice of their approach. Some-

thing of this was natural to him; but present circumstances more strongly and powerfully developed this characteristic. The accident, from which he had received so sudden a shock, tended still farther to increase the excitability of his mind. When therefore he retired for the purpose of gaining a little rest, his solitude opened a wider door to imagination and recollection; and thereupon a confused multitude of images of the past, and of fancies for the future, came rushing in upon him, and his mind was like a feather in a storm.

The surgeon was very attentive to his patient, for he made a second visit not above four hours after the first. The people at the turnpike-house told him that the gentleman had, in pursuance of the advice given him, retired to take a little rest. The medical man commended that movement; but being desirous to see how his patient rested, he opened the door of the apartment very gently, and Mr Primrose, who was wide awake,

and happy to see any one to whom he could talk, called aloud to the surgeon to walk in.

“I am not asleep, sir; you may come in; I am very glad to see you; I have felt very much relieved by the bleeding. I think I shall be quite well enough to proceed to-morrow. Pray, sir, can you inform me how far it is to Smatterton from this place?”

“About sixty miles,” replied the surgeon.

“Sixty miles!” echoed Mr Primrose; “at what a prodigious rate then we must have travelled.” Thereupon the patient raised himself up in the bed, and began, or attempted to begin, a long conversation with his doctor. “Why, sir, when I was in England last, the coach used to be nearly twice as long on the road. Is this the usual rate of travelling?”

The medical man smiled, and said, “The coach by which you travelled, is by no means a quick one, some coaches on this road travel much faster.”

“And pray, sir, do these coaches ever arrive safely at their journey’s end?”

The surgeon smiled again and said, “Oh yes, sir, accidents are very rare.”

“Then I wish,” replied Mr Primrose, “that they had not indulged me with so great a rarity just on my arrival in England. I have been in the East Indies for the last sixteen or seventeen years, and during that time—”

Few medical men whose business is worth following, have time to listen to the history of a man’s life and adventures for sixteen or seventeen years. Hindoostan is certainly a very interesting country, but there is no country on the face of the earth so interesting as a man’s own cupboard. The doctor therefore cut off his patient’s speech, not in the midst, but at the very beginning; saying unto him, with a smile, for there is much meaning in a smile; “Yes sir, certainly sir, there is no doubt of it—very true; but, sir, I think it will be better for you at present to be kept quiet; and if you can get a little sleep it will be

better for you. I think, sir, to-morrow, or the next day, you may venture to proceed on your journey. I will send you a composing draught as soon as I return home, and will see you again to-morrow, early in the morning. But I would not recommend you to travel by the stage coach."

"Ay, ay, thank you for that recommendation, and you may take my word I will follow it."

The doctor very quickly took his leave, and Mr Primrose thought him a very unmannerly cub, because he would not stop to talk. "A composing draught!" thus soliloquized the patient; "a composing draught! a composing fiddlestick! What does the fellow mean by keeping me thus in bed and sending me in his villanous compounds. Why, I think I am almost able to walk to Smatterton. I won't take his composing draught; I'll leave it here for the next coach passenger that may be overturned at the foot of this hill. I dare to say it will not spoil with keeping."

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The word "coach-passenger" brought to Mr Primrose's recollection the melancholy look and sorrowful tone of the poor woman who mentioned the young lady who seemed almost dying of a broken heart. His curiosity was roused, his nerves were agitated. He kept thinking of his poor Penelope. He recollected with an almost painful vividness the features and voice of the pretty little innocent he had left behind him when he quitted England. He recollected and painted with imagination's strongest lines and most glowing colours that distracting and heart-rending scene, when after listening with tearful silence to the kind admonitions of his brother-in-law, he snatched up in his arms his dear little laughing Penelope, and he saw again as pungently as in reality, the little arms that clasped him with an eagerness of joy, and he recollected how his poor dear child in the simplicity of her heart mistook the agitations and tremblings of grief for the frolicsome wantonness of joy, and he saw again that indescribably exquisite expres-

sion with which she first caught sight of his tears ; and then there came over his mind the impression produced by the artless manner in which the poor thing said, " Good night, papa, perhaps you won't cry to-morrow."

Now he thought of that Penelope as grown up to woman's estate, and he felt that he should be proud of his daughter : but oh what fears and misgivings came upon him, and he kept muttering to himself the words of the woman who had talked of the young lady almost dying of a broken heart. It was well for the patient that the doctor soon fulfilled his word and sent a composing draught. But the very moment that his attentive nurse gently tapped at the door of his room, he called out :

" Come in, come in, I am not asleep. Oh, what you have brought me a composing draught ! Nonsense, nonsense, keep it for the next coach-passenger that is overturned, and give it to him with my compliments. Well, but I say, good woman, you were telling me something about a

poor young lady who was almost dying with a broken heart. Who is she? Where is she? What is her name? Where is she gone to? Where did she come from? Who broke her heart? Was she married, or was she single? Now tell me all about her."

"Oh dear, sir, I am sure you had better take this physic what the doctor has sent you, that will do you more good than a mallancolly story. Indeed you'd better, sir; shall I pour it out into a cup?"

"Ay, ay, pour it out. But I say, good woman, tell me where did this poor young lady come from?"

"Lord, sir, I never saw such a curious gentleman in my life. Why, then if you must know, she came from a long way off, from a village of the name of Smatterton, a little village where my Lord Smatterton has a fine castle."

While the good woman was speaking she kept her eyes fixed upon the cup into which she

was slowly pouring the medicine, and therefore she did not perceive the effect produced upon the patient by the mention of Smatterton; for, as soon as he heard the name he started, turned pale, and was breathless and speechless for a moment; and then recovering the use of his speech, he exclaimed, "Smatterton! Smatterton! Good woman, are you in your senses? What do you mean?"

Now it was very well for Mr Primrose and his composing draught that the wife of the gate-keeper was not nervous; for had she been nervous, that sudden and almost ridiculous exclamation, uttered as it was, in a very high key, and with a very loud voice, would certainly have upset the cup together with its contents. If ever a composing draught was necessary, it clearly was so on this occasion. The good woman however did not let the cup fall, but with the utmost composure looked at the patient and said:

"Lawk-a-mercy, sir, don't be in such a taking.

I durst to say the poor cretter wasn't nobody as you know. She was a kind of a poor young lady like. There now, sir, pray do take your physic, 'cause you'll never get well if you don't."

Mr Primrose was still in great agitation, and that more from imagination than apprehension. His nervous sensibility had been excited, and everything that at all touched his feelings did most deeply move him. He therefore answered the poor woman in a hurried manner :

"Come, come, good woman, I will swallow the medicine, if you will have the goodness to tell me all you know about this poor young lady."

Now, as it was very little that the good woman did know, she thought it might be for the patient's advantage if he would take the medicine even upon those terms. For she had so much respect for the skill of the doctor, that it was her firm opinion that the draught would have more power in composing, than her slender narrative in disturbing, the gentleman's mind.

She very calmly then handed the cup and said :
“ Well, sir, then if you will but take the physic,
I will tell you all I know about the matter.”

Mr Primrose complied with the condition, and took the medicine with so much eagerness, that he seemed as if he were about to swallow cup and all.

“ There, sir,” said the good woman, mightily pleased at her own management ; “ now I hope you will soon get better.”

“ Well, now I have taken my medicine ; so tell me all you know about this young lady.”

“ Why, sir, ’t isn’t much as I know : only, about two months ago, that coach what you came by was going up to town, and it stopped, as it always does, at our gate, and the coachman says to my husband, says he, ‘ Here’s a poor young lady in the coach so ill that she cannot travel any farther ; can you take her in for a day or two ? ’ And so I went and handed the poor thing out of the coach, and I put her to bed ; and sure enough, poor thing, she was very

ill. Then, sir, I sent for the doctor; but, dear me, he could do her no good: and so then I used to go and talk to the poor cretter, and all she would say to me was, ‘Pray, let me die.’ But in a few days she grew a little better, and began to talk about continuing her journey, and I found out, sir, that the poor dear lady was broken-hearted.”

Here the narrator paused. But hitherto no definite information had been conveyed to Mr Primrose, and he almost repented that he had taken the trouble to swallow the medicine for such a meagre narrative.

“And is that all you know, good woman? Did not you learn her name?”

“Yes,” replied the informant: “her name was Fitzpatrick: and after she was gone, I asked the coachman who brought her, and he told me that that wicked young nobleman, Lord Spoonbill, had taken the poor thing away from her friends, and had promised to make a fine lady of her, but afterwards deserted her and sent her about

her business. And all because my lord was mighty sweet upon another young lady what lives at Smatterton.”

Now came the truth into Mr Primrose’s mind, and he readily knew that this other young lady was his Penelope. This corroborated the letter which Mr Darnley had written to him on the decease of Dr Greendale. Happy was it for the father of Penelope that he had no suspicion of unworthy intentions towards his daughter on the part of Lord Spoonbill; and well was it for the traveller that he had swallowed the composing draught. He received the information with tolerable calmness, and thanking the poor woman for indulging his curiosity, he very quietly dismissed her. And as soon as she was gone he muttered to himself:

“ My child shall never marry a villain, though he may be a nobleman.’

CHAPTER XVI.

WHETHER it was that the medicine which Mr Primrose had taken possessed extraordinary composing powers, or whether his mind had been quieted by its own outrageous agitations, we cannot say; but to whatever cause it might be owing, it is a fact that, on the following morning he was much more composed, and the medical attendant pronounced that he might without any danger proceed on his journey.

He was not slow in availing himself of this permission, and he also followed the suggestion of his medical attendant in not travelling by the stage-coach. After astonishing the gate-keeper and his wife, and also the doctor, by his liberality

for their attention to him, he started in a post-chaise for Smatterton. No accident or interruption impeded his progress, and at a late hour he arrived at Neverden, intending to pay his first visit to Mr Darnley, and designing through him to communicate to Penelope the knowledge of his arrival, and prepare her for the meeting.

It was necessary for Mr Primrose to introduce himself to Mr Darnley. The stately rector of Neverden was in his study. He was not much of a reading man, he never had been; but still it was necessary that he should keep up appearances, and therefore he occasionally shut himself up in that room which he called his study; and there he would read for an hour or two some papers of the Spectator, or some old numbers of the Gentleman's Magazine, or Blackstone's Commentaries, or any other book of equal reputation for sound principles. There is a great advantage in reading those books that everybody talks about and nobody reads. It was also very proper that, if any of the parishioners called on

the rector, it might be necessary to send for him "out of the study." Sometimes also Mr Darnley gave audiences in his study, and then the unlearned agriculturists thought him a most wonderful man to have so many books, and so many large books too; some of them looking as big as the great bible in the church. Mr Darnley was not at all displeased to see the eyes of his humble parishioners, when they made their appearance in that apartment, wandering curiously and modestly round the room, and leering at the great glass bookcases and the eighteen-inch globes with as much wonderment as the gulls of two centuries back used to look at the dried alligators in a conjuror's garret. How delicious is the sensation of superiority.

When the name of Primrose was mentioned, Mr Darnley thought for a moment only of Penelope, and he screwed up his lips and looked wondrously wise. Mr Primrose entered the room with a light and lively step, and with a bright and cheerful countenance, taking it for

granted that everybody in England must be as glad to see him as he was to see his native land again. Mr Darnley rose with great stateliness, and advanced a step or two towards the door.

“ Ah! Mr Darnley, your most humble servant; my name is Primrose, I received a letter from you about six weeks ago, which you did me the honor to write to me concerning the death of my poor brother Greendale.”

At the end of the sentence Mr Primrose spoke in a more subdued tone, as became him when speaking of the death of a dear friend. But as he spoke he offered his hand to the rector of Neverden, who in return offered his, but it was by no means an equivalent; for the reverend divine gave his hand so formally and indifferently, that it was to Mr Primrose as cold and flabby as a duck's foot. And he said, “ Mr Primrose, I am happy to see you. You are welcome to England.” But though he said he was happy, he did not look so,

unless it be true, as some philosophers have averred, that happiness is the most serious thing in the world. The rector of Neverden also said, "I beg you will be seated, sir." He had learned that from the Right Honorable the Earl of Smatterton; for no man is so great a simpleton that nothing can be learned from him.

There was nothing uncivil or rude in this reception; what could be more proper or polite than to welcome Mr Primrose to England, and ask him to be seated? But Mr Primrose felt a chill at this reception. However, he sat down; and then the polite rector, when his visitor was seated, sat down also. Then he snuffed the candles, and carefully closed the book that he had been reading, and pushed it some distance from him, even so far as his arm could reach, and then he turned himself in his chair from the table, and towards Mr Primrose, and looked at him as much as to say, "What do you want with me?"

Mr Primrose interpreted the look, and said "I have never had the pleasure of seeing you before Mr Darnley, except for a very few minutes, and at some distance of time; but as you wrote to me an account of my dear brother's death, and as I have now returned to England, and am expecting presently the happiness of a meeting with my dear child, I thought it might be advisable to call first on you, that some message may be sent to Penelope, that the surprise may not be too much for her."

"Miss Primrose," said the imperturbable rector of Neverden, "is not at present in this part of the country."

The effect of the composing draught was completely gone off, and Mr Primrose started up from the chair to which he had been so politely invited, and exclaimed with great impetuosity, "Good God! Mr Darnley, you don't say so."

Mr Darnley was not so much agitated as

Mr Primrose, and therefore he compressed his lips and knitted his brows, and then opened his mouth and said very composedly: "Mr Primrose, I beg that you would recollect that I am a clergyman, and therefore that it is not becoming and correct, that in my presence, you should take the name of the Lord in vain."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr Primrose, with tears in his eyes, "but consider, sir, I am a father, and—"

"I also am a father," interrupted the rector, "and have more children than you have."

"Oh, but tell me, tell me, sir, is my child living?"

"To the best of my knowledge Miss Primrose is living."

"But where is she? Why has she left Smaterton?"

"I believe, sir, that Miss Primrose is in London, that is all that I know of her, except—" Here the rector hesitated, as if reluctant and fearful to say all that he knew.

If composure of manner be at all contagious, Mr Primrose was the last person in the world to catch the contagion; for at this dry hesitation he became more violent, and exclaimed with great earnestness :

“ Mr Darnley, you are a man, and must have the feelings of humanity. I implore and conjure you by all that is sacred to put me out of this dreadful state of suspense, and tell me at once all you know of my poor child; something you must know and you ought to know.”

There was an energy of utterance and a heart-reaching tone in this last sentence, which staggered Mr Darnley's cold formality and discomposed his stateliness. The almost awful emphasis which Mr Primrose gave to the expression, “ you ought to know,” reminded Mr Darnley that he had but imperfectly performed his duty to the niece of his old friend Dr Greendale; and the strong feeling thus expressed compelled the pompous man to some-

thing of more kindly thought and language. He rose from his seat, and took Mr Primrose by the hand, and said to him:

“ My good sir, pray compose yourself, be seated, and I will give you all the information in my power. Your daughter is living, and is, I believe, in health. You know, I presume, that there formerly was something of an acquaintance between Miss Primrose and my son, and you also know, as I learn by a letter from my son, who had the honor of meeting you at St Helena, that this acquaintance has ceased.”

“ I know it, Mr Darnley, and I am sorry for it, very sorry for it indeed, especially from what I have since heard of that young gentleman who is said to be paying attention to her.”

Mr Darnley here shook his head, and then proceeded.

“ After the decease of my good friend and

neighbour Dr Greendale, before I knew that the correspondence had ceased between the young folks, I offered Miss Primrose an asylum in my house."

Here Mr Darnley paused for a compliment; he had learned that of the Right Honorable the Earl of Smatterton. Mr Primrose paid him the proper compliment on his liberality, and the worthy rector continued his narrative.

"Miss Primrose was pleased to decline the offer on the ground that the Countess of Smatterton had taken upon herself to provide for her. And it is not many days since Miss Primrose left Smatterton for London, where she now is, in the house of Lord Smatterton, and she honored us with a call before her departure, and I took the liberty of giving her the best advice in my power, to guard her against the snares and dangers to which she might be exposed in that profession which she is about to adopt."

“ Profession she is about to adopt ! Mr Darnley. And may I ask what that profession is ? ”

“ The musical profession, Mr Primrose. ”

The father of Penelope was indignant, and he replied contemptuously : “ Impossible ! Can the patronage of the Countess do nothing better for my child than make her a teacher of music. But there will be no necessity now— ”

Before Mr Primrose could finish the sentence, Mr Darnley corrected the misapprehension and said : “ Not a teacher of music, sir, but a public singer ”

This made the matter worse, and the poor man was just ready to burst out into violent exclamations again, but recollecting that it was in his power now to place his child in a situation of independence, and considering that the time of her departure from Smatterton had been too recent to render it likely that she had yet appeared in public, he contented himself with saying, “ I am astonished that the Countess should think of such a profession for a young

woman brought up as my child has been. If my poor brother-in-law had lived he would never have suffered it."

"I was also astonished," said Mr Darnley, "that Miss Primrose should give her consent to such a proposal; for my friend Dr Greendale used to express himself very strongly on that subject, and endeavour to dissuade Miss Primrose from adopting such a profession. It has long been the wish of the Countess of Smatterton, but her ladyship did not succeed in the proposal during the lifetime of Dr Greendale."

Much more to the same purpose did Mr Darnley say on the subject, not much to the satisfaction of Mr Primrose. It is not pleasant for a father to hear anything to the discredit of a child, but fortunately parents do not always believe such stories, or they find excuses which nobody else can. So Mr Primrose did not, could not, and would not believe the insinuation that Mr Darnley threw out against Pene-

lope, as if she had waited only for Dr Greendale's decease to adopt a profession against which he had serious objections; and Mr Primrose thought it most probable that the Countess of Smatterton had used great importunity, or that Penelope had complied, to relieve Mrs Greendale of a burden. There was indeed some difficulty in his mind to reconcile this story of Mr Darnley with the insinuation thrown out in his letter, and corroborated by the poor woman at the turnpike-gate, concerning the son of the Earl of Smatterton having withdrawn the affections of Penelope from Robert Darnley to himself. But Mr Primrose had been out of England many years; and fashions had changed since he left his native land. It was perhaps now quite elegant and fashionable to appear on the stage. He recollected that when he was at school, he had read of Nero, the Roman emperor, appearing on the stage as a public performer, and for aught that could be known to Mr Primrose, the progress of refine-

ment in England might have pointed out dramatic or musical exhibition as a fit introduction to the honor of an alliance with nobility.

At all events, whatever were his notions or apprehensions he was by this time considerably more calm and composed. He had the satisfaction of knowing that his daughter was alive and well, and he had the pleasing prospect of speedily seeing her again. Of her moral and mental qualities, and of her intellectual improvement, he had been in the constant habit of receiving flattering and agreeable accounts, and he was not unwilling to believe them. There was some little mortification, that he had travelled so far and all to no purpose. But he had no other means of ascertaining where his daughter was.

It was a conceit of his own, (though partly aided by his late brother-in-law,) not to keep any direct correspondence with his daughter. His motive was, that as there was a possibility that he might never return to England, and that he might not ever have it in his power to provide for

her according to his former means, therefore he thought it best not to excite any expectations which might be frustrated, or to excite in her mind any interest concerning himself, which might ultimately be productive of only pain and uneasiness. He wished his poor child to consider herself an orphan, thinking it better to surprise her with a living parent than to inflict grief on her mind at the thoughts of one deceased.

This scheme did not entirely succeed. The worthy and benevolent rector of Smatterton could not help now and then saying a favourable word or two concerning his poor brother Primrose ; and as Dr Greendale's was the charity that hopeth all things and believeth all things, he was not distrustful of his brother's promises, but was nearly, if not altogether, as sanguine as Mr Primrose himself. By degrees Penelope came to have an interest in her absent parent ; and well it was for her that Dr Greendale had thus accustomed her to think of her father : for when the good rector departed this life he did not leave his

niece quite so orphaned as if she had had no knowledge or thought of her absent father. But to proceed with our story.

We have said that it was late in the evening when Mr Primrose arrived at Neverden. It was no great distance indeed to Smatterton; but why should he go there in any hurry, seeing that his daughter was not there? This consideration induced Mr Darnley to offer to the traveller the accommodation of a bed: for Mr Darnley was not a churlish man; he was only very cold, and very formal, and very pompous. The offer was readily accepted, and the rector of Neverden then conducted Mr Primrose from the study to the apartment in which the family was sitting. Great curiosity was excited as soon as Mr Darnley announced the name of his late arrived guest. The young ladies felt particularly interested in looking at the father of Penelope; but they did not make themselves, as they thought, quite so agreeable as they should have done had matters been proceeding in proper order with respect to

their brother and Penelope. The absence of that species of agreeableness to which we allude, was no great inconvenience to Mr Primrose; for he was weary with travelling, and exhausted by manifold agitations, and it would not have been very agreeable to him with all this exhaustion to undergo a cheerful volley of everlasting interrogations; and Miss Mary Darnley would to a certainty have extorted from him a civil, ecclesiastical, statistical, botanical, and zoological, history of British India, to say nothing of Persia, China, Japan, and the million isles of the Eastern ocean.

But though the young ladies were not disposed to apply the question to Mr Primrose, their mother, who was as ready to forgive as she was apt to forget, talked to him as cordially and cheerfully as if the day had been fixed for the marriage of Robert Darnley and Penelope Primrose. Her talk, however, was not wearying, because there was no affectation in it, and because there was much good feeling in it. Her

talk was concerning her dear boy ; and Mr Primrose, who had a parent's heart, enjoyed such talk.

“ And so, Mr Primrose, you have seen my dear Robert ? And how did he look ? He is dying to return to Neverden. We expect him next week, for the ship is now in the Downs. Did you think, sir, he seemed in good health ? ”

“ In perfect health, madam : in fact I never saw a young man who had been so long in India look so well as your son.”

“ There was no yellowness in his look ? ” asked Mrs Darnley.

“ Not the slightest, I can assure Mrs Darnley.”

“ And was he not much sun-burnt ? ”

Mr Primrose smiled, and said, “ Not any more, madam, than a young man ought to be ; and though I never had the pleasure of seeing the young gentleman before, I do really believe that whatever darkness may have been added to his complexion is rather an improvement to his appearance than otherwise.”

“ I am ashamed, Mr Primrose, to be so troublesome ; but did you go aboard his ship when you were at St Helena ? Do you know what sort of accommodations he had ? ”

“ I certainly did not, madam, but I have every reason to suppose that he had every comfort that could be expected.”

“ Why, yes, no doubt. But still it must be a great confinement. It is a very long voyage. Had you any storms, sir, as you came home ? ”

“ Upon my word, Mrs Darnley, I really forget what kind of weather we had ; but we had nothing very serious, or I should have remembered it.”

With many such-like questions and answers was the evening beguiled, and it was late before Mr Primrose retired to rest.

The young ladies took some part in the conversation, though but little ; and Mr Darnley himself also now and then joined in the discourse, especially when Mrs Darnley, in the simplicity of her heart, asked questions which indicated a

sinful ignorance of geography or history. In such cases Mr Darnley took especial care to manifest how much wiser he was than his wife. Positively it is a great shame, and altogether unreasonable to expect that people who have been from school thirty years or more should be as wise and learned as those who have just finished their education, or as those who have a study where they can sit and read and grow learned every hour in the day.

When the young ladies were alone they made amends for their previous silence. They all talked together to one another concerning Mr Primrose, and all three gave their opinions of him. By the way, it is great nonsense to talk about giving an opinion. It is almost as bad as giving advice; for neither one nor the other is ever taken, and how can any one give that which nobody takes? There was, however, this unanimity among the Miss Darnleys; they all concurred in saying and thinking that he was a very agreeable and interesting man, and a very lively

man. They would indeed have thought him lively had they witnessed the energy of his manner in the study with Mr Darnley. But before the discussion closed, Miss Mary Darnley could not help saying : “ What strange questions mamma did ask ! I wonder what Mr Primrose thought of her ? ”

CHAPTER XVII.

WITHOUT the assistance of a composing draught Mr Primrose slept soundly and woke calmly. But, being naturally impetuous and hasty, he could not help uttering a few monosyllables of impatience at the thought that he had travelled two hundred miles from his daughter, and had incurred the risk of breaking his neck in making a journey to the place where his daughter was not.

As, however, he was so near Smatterton, he would not of course return to London without seeing Mrs Greendale, and thanking her for the kind attention which she had paid to Penelope. He was not aware that the good lady had plagued and worried the poor girl almost out of her life.

Dr Greendale had never, in his communications to Mr Primrose, said anything about the annoying fidgettiness of Mrs Greendale; and he himself, by virtue of his close and constant application to study, had not felt much inconvenience from her temper, excepting so far as an occasional interruption, which was soon forgotten. But poor Penelope did not study controversial theology, and therefore she had felt all the inconvenience of Mrs Greendale's humours and caprices. Of all this Mr Primrose knew nothing; he therefore resolved to call and pay his respects to the widow.

Having learned a lesson of forethought from his long fruitless journey, he did not proceed to Smatterton before he had enquired of Mr Darnley if Mrs Greendale yet resided there. By this enquiry he learned that the living had been disposed of, and that as the new rector was a young and single man, and though he had taken possession of the rectory-house, he had been kind enough to accommodate Mrs Greendale with a residence

there till it might suit her to change the place of her abode. "That is very kind of the young man," said Mr Primrose; "I like him for it: and pray what is his name and where does he come from?"

Mr Darnley at these questions put on one of his stately professional looks, and said: "His name, sir, is Pringle, he comes from the university of Oxford, he is a son of Lord Smatterton's steward. At present I have but little acquaintance with him."

There seemed, from Mr Darnley's manner of speaking, to be on his part no great desire to increase the acquaintance. Of this, however, Mr Primrose took no notice; in fact, he hardly understood it, for his own manner was straitforward and downright, he did not accustom himself to innuendos and insinuations. Thanking the rector of Neverden for his attention and hospitality, Mr Primrose proceeded immediately after breakfast to the village of Smatterton. Mrs Greendale was within, and she re-

ceived Mr Primrose with the utmost cordiality and cheerfulness : but when she began to allude to her poor dear husband then the tears came into her eyes. Mr Primrose sympathized with her, and they both talked of old times ; and as the subject was changed the tears were dried up. It was very right that Mrs Greendale should most cordially receive Mr Primrose, for all persons who come home from the East Indies in good spirits are supposed to come home rich, and there is to some minds something very agreeable in the sight of a rich man. Let sentimentality-people prose as much as they please about the homage that is paid to wealth ; it would be much worse if that homage were paid to poverty. The conversation then turned to Penelope, and many and sincere were the thanks that Mr Primrose returned to Mrs Greendale for her very kind attentions to the poor girl ; and then Mrs Greendale, in spite of all the severe and sneering rebukes, which in former days she had lavished upon her

niece, began to launch out into commendations of the young lady's beauty, wit, and accomplishments.

“ But what a pity it is, Mr Primrose, that you did not know that Penelope was in London. Well, you will have such a treat in seeing her again, she is so grown and so improved. She is a favorite with everybody. A day or two before my poor dear husband died, we had a party, and Lord Spoonbill, and Colonel Crop, and Miss Spoonbill were all here; and Lord Spoonbill was so attentive, you can't think. Then my Lady Smatterton has taken such a fancy to her, that she insists upon having her in London.”

“ Ay, but Mrs Greendale, I don't understand the condition on which my child is thus taken up to London; and to tell you the truth, I do not altogether approve the plan which Mr Darnley informed me was in contemplation. It is not very agreeable to my feelings that my daughter should be made a public performer.”

“ Oh dear no, certainly; but I dare say the Countess of Smatterton would not recommend anything improper.”

“ I don’t know what may be Lady Smatterton’s notions of propriety, but I shall take care that my daughter does not adopt that or any other profession.”

While they were talking, the arrival of Nick Muggins with the letter-bag reminded Mr Primrose that it might be desirable to apprize Penelope of his being in England and of his intention of immediately seeing her. He therefore dispatched a note to his daughter, under cover to the Right Honorable the Earl of Smatterton, and thus he made wise provision against further accidents preventing their meeting.

As Mr Primrose had experienced the inconvenience of one overturn by the stage-coach, he determined not to trust himself again so soon to the same mode of conveyance; and as he intended to travel post, and as he was not about to set out immediately, he amused himself with

strolling about the village to admire its beauties ; for everybody said that Smatterton was a very pretty village. In the month of December English scenery seldom appears to great advantage ; and while Mr Primrose was looking for, rather than at, the beauties of Smatterton, who should he meet but the very identical Mr Kipperson with whom he had travelled in the stage-coach ? The parties recognized each other immediately, and they presently entered into chat. Mr Kipperson expressed great concern for the accident, but was exceedingly rejoiced to find that his fellow-traveller was not seriously hurt. “ For indeed, sir,” said he, “ I almost thought that you were killed.”

“ So did I,” replied Mr Primrose : “ but what can be the use of travelling at that unreasonably rapid rate ? When I was in England, sixteen years ago, the stage-coaches used to go at a very reasonable and moderate pace.”

“ Yes, yes, I remember it,” said Mr Kipperson ; “ but we should never be able to get on

with business were it not for this quick travelling. I will tell you, sir, an instance of its utility: the other day I received a letter from my friend the Earl of Smatterton, informing me of an important debate which was just coming on, and it was a matter of infinite moment that I should be in town in order to attend some meetings that were to be held, and to give my opinion concerning some clauses which were likely to be introduced greatly affecting the agricultural interest. I received the letter just in time to take advantage of the coach, and, by means of quick travelling, I arrived in town time enough to give my views of the subject, and to prevent the passing of some most destructive measures."

"You are a member of parliament, I presume?" said Mr Primrose.

"No, sir," said Mr Kipperson, with that sort of air that seemed to indicate that he did not at all desire that honor, and that he was a person of

greater importance; "but now and then parliament is pleased to do me the honor of consulting me on some topics connected with the interests of agriculture."

Though Mr Primrose was what in ordinary language is called an independent man, yet he could not but feel reverence for greatness; and finding that the gentleman with whom he was conversing was a person of some consequence, he was desirous of knowing who it was. This desire was but slightly hinted, and immediately the great agricultural luminary gratified Mr Primrose's laudable thirst after knowledge by saying: "My name, sir, is Kipperson. Kipperson, sir, of Smatterton."

It was very excusable that Mr Primrose, who had been so many years out of England, should not be familiar with the name, and should not be aware that he was addressing the celebrated agriculturist, Kipperson of Smatterton. Mr Kipperson himself was so modest a man that

he did not choose to say that he was the celebrated one of that name, but he took especial care to let it be understood indirectly and circuitously that he was a person of some importance in the world.

And now it was very natural that the great agriculturist should be desirous of knowing the name and designation of his fellow traveller, and to ascertain that was also no great difficulty. As soon as he found that he was conversing with the father of Penelope Primrose, he broke out into the most eloquent panegyrics on the character, moral, intellectual, and professional, of the late rector of the parish, and congratulated Mr Primrose in having had the good fortune to confide his daughter to the care of so superlatively excellent a man. "But, sir," as suddenly recollecting himself, "perhaps you will do me the honor to walk in and sit down under my humble roof; for I can give you the latest information concerning Miss Primrose. It is very singular that I should have travelled up to London with

the daughter and down from London with the father."

At that singularity, or at his own penetration in discovering the curious coincidence, Mr Kipperson smiled. Mr Primrose accepted the invitation and walked into Mr Kipperson's house, which was near the place where they had met. It was a piece of affectation in Mr Kipperson to call his place of abode a humble roof. True, it was not so magnificent as Smatterton castle, but its owner had been at great pains and expense to make it look quite the reverse of humble. That which had been a productive little garden was converted into a lawn. Those barns, piggeries, and outhouses, in which was deposited no small part of the owner's wealth, had been gracefully, but ungratefully, planted out. French windows supplied the place of old-fashioned casements, and green verandahs gave Peter Kipperson's farm-house as much as possible the air of an Oriental palace.

Mr Primrose was surprised, as Peter hoped

and designed, at the very learned air of the library, to say nothing of the numerous busts and casts which in the narrow entrance occupied that room which would have been much more usefully devoted to cloak-pegs. When they were seated in the library Mr Kipperson commenced his narrative, telling Mr Primrose what the reader is already acquainted with. But still the father of Penelope was not reconciled even to the attempt or proposal to make his daughter a public singer. Mr Kipperson however assured him, that nothing could be more respectable than the manner in which the Countess of Smatterton designed to bring out Miss Primrose.

“I was present at an evening party,” said the agriculturist, “given by my friend the Countess of Smatterton, for the express purpose of introducing Miss Primrose to some of the best society in town. There were several persons of rank there, and among the rest the celebrated Duchess of Steeple Bumstead; and

her Grace was quite enraptured with Miss Primrose."

"Well," said the father of Penelope with some shortness and dryness of manner, "I don't understand these matters. I have been so long out of England that I almost forget the customs of my native land; but I do not approve of this kind of association with persons of so much higher rank and fortune. The Countess of Smatterton cannot consider my daughter as an equal, and therefore she is tolerated for the amusement she can afford. I don't like it, sir, I don't like it. But, Mr Kipperson, can you tell me what kind of a man is Lord Spoonbill?"

Mr Kipperson promptly replied: "A man of no intellect whatever."

"A fig for intellect," replied Mr Primrose; "but is he a man of good character?"

"Indeed sir," responded the great agriculturist of Smatterton, "I am sorry to say he is not. The Earl himself is a very respect-

able man, so far as moral conduct is concerned, though he is a man of no mind; and he is a proud man, very distant and pompous, and quite an exclusive."

"An exclusive!" echoed Mr Primrose; "what is meant by an exclusive?"

"By exclusive, sir, I mean that the Earl is not easily led to associate with those whom he considers of an inferior rank to himself; he is one of a set, as it were."

"Oh, is that all!" exclaimed Mr Primrose; "why at that rate all the world is exclusive. This is no new character though it may be a new name."

"Very true, indeed, very true, there has always been too much pride among persons of high rank."

"And not too little among persons of low rank, I presume," replied Mr Primrose; "and I suppose as you have a set of people in England, called exclusives, you have most likely another set called intrusives. For my part I like a little

pride, or at least what the world calls pride; I have so much myself, that I dislike the situation in which I find my daughter is placed, and I shall make all haste to remove her from it. I am most happy that I have arrived in England time enough to prevent her from making a public display of her musical talents."

The wise and scientific Mr Kipperson was not sorry to hear that the father of Penelope Primrose could talk thus boldly and definitely concerning his daughter's independence. It was also not unpleasant to him to hear that it was the intention of the young lady's father to remove her from the house and patronage of the Earl of Smatterton. It has been already hinted that Mr Kipperson was an admirer of the young lady, and it was not likely that his admiration should be less when he found that her father had returned to England in possession, most probably, of ample means of securing his daughter's independence. This consideration inspired the agriculturist with an earnest desire of making

himself more agreeable than usual ; and as there was a great deal of freedom of manner and candour of feeling about Mr Primrose, he very readily and sociably conversed with Mr Kipperson on any and every topic that could be started. In the fullness of his heart the admirer of Penelope urged the young lady's father to partake of a humble dinner, quite in a social friendly way. This invitation however was of necessity declined, it being the intention of Mr Primrose to pass the remainder of the day at the rectory.

The mention of the rectory led Mr Kipperson to speak of the new rector, the Rev. Charles Pringle. "You will of course meet this gentleman at dinner. He is a very different man from our late rector ; as yet we know little of him. I have conversed with him occasionally ; he seems to have very just notions on the subject of the interests of agriculture ; but his mind does not appear to be comprehensive and philosophical ; he does not read much, I think ; indeed, he has

scarcely any books of his own, and though I have offered him the use of my library he does not avail himself of it. But you will see him at the rectory at dinner, and then you may form your own opinion of him."

It was very kind and liberal of Mr Kipperson to give Mr Primrose leave to form his own opinion of the new rector. What opinion Mr Primrose did form of the new rector we cannot say, for he was not very free in expressing his opinion of those with whom he had no common interest or sympathies, nor was he particularly and curiously observant to ascertain whether those with whom he conversed occasionally were persons of comprehensive and philosophical minds or not. He was not quite sure that he knew what was meant by the term *comprehensive*, as applied to the mind; and as to *philosophical*, if that meant loving wisdom, he himself was philosophical enough in all conscience, for he liked wise men much better than fools. In a word, the father of Penelope had quite as good an

understanding as multitudes who make a great deal of prating about intellect, but he was not a man of much reading, and did not value pedantry of any kind, whether literary, scientific, fashionable or philosophical.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EVEN as Mr Kipperson predicted so it came to pass ; Mr Primrose met at dinner the new rector of Smatterton.

The great difference which there is between an old man and a young one, is one cause of the general common-place notion of the deterioration of the human species. It seemed a very great transition from Dr Greendale to Mr Pringle. The doctor used to be grave, sedate, yet cheerful, very placid and gentle in his manner, and towards his parishioners he wore the aspect of a father. His dress too was so venerable. He used to wear a long single-breasted coat, and he had such fine broad old-fashioned silver buckles at

his knees and on his shoes ; his hat too was just such a hat as a clergyman ought to wear. And when he walked out into the village he always carried under his arm an old gold-headed walking cane ; for he seldom leant upon it. He walked slowly and demurely, and when the little boys and girls who met him planted themselves, according to their clumsy but sincere politeness, directly before him to make their bow or curtesy, he patted them on the head, and they felt themselves as much honoured and pleased as the alderman of some provincial borough when the king places the sword on his shoulder. And when the old people met him he talked to them, and, even more than that, he listened to their talk ; he could not always understand it, but he paid attention to it and it pleased them. Sometimes he would be in a gayer and livelier mood than usual, especially if in his morning studies he had been successful in detecting, or eloquent in pointing, some irrefragable argument against the sectarians. And then, if he met any young

woman of pretty and smiling looks, for there were many such in Smatterton, he would ask her when she was going to be married, and then she would laugh and try to blush, and she would go home and tell her mother what a funny man Dr Greendale was.

Now whatever might be the virtues, moral or professional, of the Rev. Charles Pringle, it is very clear that he could not find the way to the hearts of his parishioners by the same means as his predecessor. A slightly built youth of five-and-twenty would look anything but venerable, if dressed in attire of the same form, cut and complexion as that which Dr Greendale wore. The gold-headed cane, the looped hat, the slow and stately walk, would not at all answer with a young man; and had he asked any young woman when she was going to be married, it would have been thought quite indecorous. The old women too would not think of telling a young man round-about stories concerning their sufferings with the *rheumatiz*, or other ills that

“flesh,” or more properly skin and bone, may be “heir to.”

It was therefore essential and unavoidable that there should be a difference between the old and the new rector. It will however be supposed by our readers, who remember that we have described the Earl of Smatterton as boasting that he always bestowed his livings according to merit,—it will be supposed, that the Rev. Charles Pringle had merit, though not precisely of the same nature as the merit of Dr Greendale. The merit for which his lordship bestowed the living of Smatterton on Mr Pringle, was not his own merit but that of his father. For the young rector was, as already noticed, the son of Lord Smatterton’s house-steward. This steward had been faithful in his office, and was a great favorite with his lordship ; but though he was faithful he had saved a little money, and was desirous of setting his son forward in life. The father was of opinion that the legal profession would suit the young man very well, seeing he

was so very clever. The son also was perfectly well aware of his own cleverness; but as the confinement of an attorney's office did not suit his inclinations, he excused himself from that pursuit. On the same or similar ground he declined the medical profession, inasmuch as it was contrary to his notions of comfort to be called from his bed at midnight, or to be interrupted at his meals. The church seemed to be the only comfortable profession, and on that the young gentleman fixed his choice. Moreover it gratified his vanity to go to college. He might have had ambition, but he did not like trouble; and being, as we have said, a clever young man, he shewed his cleverness by studying only just so much as might save him from being plucked. He obtained his degree and that was all. With equal dexterity and cleverness did he manage that reading which was necessary preparatory to taking orders. The examining chaplain who passed him, observed that he was a clever man, for he had most ingeniously hit upon the exact

minimum of information which would enable him to pass. There is a proverb, which says that lazy folks take the most pains ; and in many cases Mr Pringle illustrated this proverb, for nobody could take more pains than he did to avoid labour.

We cannot see how the Earl of Smatterton was to blame for appointing this young gentleman to the living of Smatterton. It is not to be supposed that his lordship should take the trouble to examine the youth ; and as the father was a faithful servant the Earl was rewarding merit by providing for the son.

More remains to be said concerning the new rector. He was a man of good temper and very harmless disposition. He was not at all given to quarrelling, for he did not like the trouble ; and he was very easy to deal with in fixing the composition for his tithes. The farmers thought him rather proud ; for he took very little notice of any of them except Mr Kipperson, who kept an excellent table. He paid great attention to Miss Spoon-

bill, though his only recompense for that attention was an occasional cup of tea, and that by no means strong: but it was handed to him on a large silver waiter, and presented by a servant who wore a very splendid livery. There was much courtesy of manner in Mr Pringle; he was, according to the best of his ability, a perfect gentleman, and whenever he observed any article of dress, or mode of expression or pronunciation, or any species of action peculiar to persons in high life, he copied it most faithfully as far as his profession would allow. His courtesy was very great, for he had the sagacity to know that, if he was too lazy to provide for himself, he must persuade some one else to provide for him.

One word more, and that concerning the young man's politics. The world does not much care about Mr Pringle's politics, but still the politics of a clergyman looking for preferment are to himself matters of great moment. Before Mr Charles Pringle went to Oxford, he was what is called liberal in his politics; at

Oxford he found it more genteel to be a Tory ; but under the patronage of a great Whig lord, it was a matter of course that he should regard the Whig aristocracy with reverence and approbation.

We should not have said so much of Mr Pringle, had it not been that he had once seen Penelope Primrose and greatly admired her, and had it not also been that the return of Mr Primrose to England rendered it a very promising speculation for the young gentleman to think seriously of paying his addresses to her.

When Mr Primrose first called at the rectory the reverend divine was not visible, for he had not finished the duties of the toilet. But hearing that Mr Primrose was in England and at Smatterton, he felt most happy in an opportunity of paying his respects. And such was the candour of Mr Primrose, that he thought the new rector a very agreeable sensible man. The two gentlemen at dinner-time talked with great fluency on a variety of topics which neither of

them understood or cared about. Now Mr Primrose was at this time in that state of mind which prepared and disposed him to be easily pleased, and therefore the efforts of Mr Pringle to make himself agreeable succeeded to admiration. Quite delighted was the rector of Smatterton to hear the father of Penelope express himself so well pleased with that village as to be desirous of taking up his residence there. Very politely did the reverend gentleman remark that there was no house in the village fit for Mr Primrose's reception. Mr Primrose however observed that he was by no means particular, and that a mere cottage would answer his purpose. Mr Pringle thought that he should have no objection to giving up the parsonage and finding a residence for himself, and there was some little talk to that purpose, but nothing was definitely agreed upon.

As the two gentlemen were engaged in chat about everything and nothing, a very unexpected interruption was given to their conversation by

the entrance of Robert Darnley. He had arrived at Neverden much sooner than he had been expected, and hearing that Mr Primrose had been there on the preceding day, and was now in all probability at Smatterton, he determined, notwithstanding all persuasions to the contrary, to ride over and see the father of Penelope. The young gentleman's sisters were unanimous in expressing their disapprobation of such a step; and Mr Darnley the elder would have interfered with the pompousness of authority to prevent it, had he not been sagacious enough to know that such interference would be ineffectual, and wise enough to consider that it is very impolitic to endanger one's dignity by uttering commands which will with impunity be disobeyed. He could not however help giving his opinion. He was surprised, he said, that a young man of such good sense and independent spirit as Robert Darnley should let himself down so far as to turn suppliant. The young lady, he observed, had already given abundant manifestation of the change of her mind and the indifferency of her

feelings on the subject, it would therefore be worse than useless to attempt to renew the acquaintance, it would be absolutely humiliating, and there never could subsist a right feeling of cordiality between them.

All this talk, however, had no influence on Robert Darnley : he was not sure that there had been so pointed a manifestation of change of mind ; he had too good an opinion of Penelope's understanding to believe that she should have capriciously changed her mind ; he thought it very probable that there might have been some miscarriage of letters ; and he resolved that he would not suffer the matter to rest in the present dubious and mysterious twilight of information. For he very thoughtfully remarked, that it was possible there might be, through the irregular transmission of letters, some errors which might lead Miss Primrose to consider him as the person dropping the acquaintance. At all events, as he had never had any difference with Mr Primrose, but, on the contrary, had been very civilly and politely treated when they met

at St Helena on their voyage home, it would be but an act of common civility to pay his respects to the father of Penelope now that he was in the immediate neighbourhood.

There is something pleasant and refreshing in the contemplation of that wholesome state of mind in which Robert Darnley shewed himself to be on the present occasion. People sometimes make a great blustering and a noisy parade about demanding an explanation; but they generally set about this demanding an explanation in such a hot-headed, bullying style, as to render explanation almost impossible, and make that which is perplexed still more perplexed. It was not so with the younger Darnley. He was no miracle either of wisdom or virtue; but he had good sense and good feeling; and he also had a tolerable good opinion of his own discernment, and he could not easily bring himself to believe, notwithstanding all that had been said by his father and his sisters, that he had misapprehended or overrated the character of Penelope Primrose.

These feelings, which were habitual and constitutional to Robert Darnley, gave him a natural and easy cheerfulness of look and manner. When therefore he was announced at the rectory of Smatterton as enquiring for Mr Primrose, the announcement was received with great satisfaction.

“ My good friend,” exclaimed Mr Primrose, with much cordiality, “ I am most happy to see you. So you are just arrived in England. But you must have made very great haste to arrive here from the Downs in little more than four and twenty hours.”

“ I have not travelled quite so rapidly as that, sir,” replied Mr Robert Darnley, “ but you may suppose I lost no time : and I am happy that I am here soon enough to pay my respects to you before your return. It would also have given me pleasure could I have met Miss Primrose.”

“ Would it indeed ? What ! after she has jilted you ? You are a young man of very forgiving disposition.”

“ I must first of all know for a certainty that the lady has, as you say, jilted me, before I feel resentment. The correspondence was interrupted, but that might be accidental. I must have an explanation, then it will be time enough to be angry.”

“ Well said, young man ; I like your notions. But from what I hear, both at Neverden and Smatterton, I fear that my young lady has been fascinated by a sounding title. I hear a great deal that I cannot well understand. If travellers see strange things abroad, they also hear strange things when they come home again.”

Mr Primrose ceased speaking. Robert Darnley looked thoughtful ; and the parties looked at each other with some feeling of perplexity. The father of Penelope, as being the most impetuous, though by far the oldest of the two, after a short interval continued : “ But what do you propose to do ? Or what must I say or do for you ? Will you set off with me to London tomorrow morning ? ”

Robert Darnley looked serious at that proposal, and replied: "So early as tomorrow morning, under present circumstances, I think hardly practicable. I do not know what would be the consequence to my poor mother, if, after so long an absence from home, I should omit, just at my return, to eat my Christmas dinner with her."

"Well, I shall go to town," said Mr Primrose, "and I will endeavour to ascertain the truth of the matter; and if there has been any accidental loss of letters, it will be a great pity to make that the cause of breaking off an old acquaintance."

"I simply wish it, sir, to be understood by Miss Primrose, that the cessation of the correspondence has not been my act and deed. But that I wrote three letters to her from Calcutta, to none of which I have ever received any answer. If the acquaintance is to be discontinued, it shall not rest on me, as arising from any fickleness on my part."

"Good, sir, very good. You are a comparative

stranger to me, it is true ; but I commend your spirit, that you are not hasty in resentment before you know for what. And this I can tell you," continued he, in a more slow and serious tone, "such was my thorough confidence in the good sense and discernment of my poor brother Greendale, that I cannot but feel respect for any one whom he respected ; and I know that he respected you most sincerely."

Thereupon the two gentlemen, with cordial grasp and tearful eyes, shook each other by the hand most heartily, and parted very well pleased with each other.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR PRIMROSE on the following morning set off for London in a post-chaise, being unwilling to risk his neck a second time in a stage-coach; for he had taken it into his head that a stage-coach must be overturned at the bottom of a steep hill. He travelled alone; and we will for the present leave him alone; though it might be very entertaining to observe how pettishly he brooked the tediousness of that mode of travelling, and how teasing he was to the post-boys, sometimes urging them to drive fast, and then rebuking them for using their horses so cruelly. What the poor man could find to amuse himself with for the long journey, which occupied him nearly three

days, we cannot tell. In the meantime, we find it necessary to return to that part of our narrative in which we related that the partial exhibition to which Penelope had been exposed at the Countess of Smatterton's select little party, had produced an almost serious illness.

Nothing could exceed the kind attentions of the Countess. Every hour was she making enquiries, and all that could possibly be said or done by way of alleviation or consolation did her ladyship say and do for her heart-broken patient. It never for one single moment entered the mind of Lady Smatterton that Miss Primrose could feel the slightest repugnance in the world to the profession which had been chosen for her; nor could her ladyship think that any sorrow or deep feeling was on the mind of Penelope for the death of her uncle, or that there was any harassing anxiety on her spirits at the thought of her father's probable arrival in England. The Countess of Smatterton might have been a woman of very great feeling; but, from difference

of situation, she could not by any means sympathize with Penelope. There is an infinite difference between five hundred acquaintances and an only dear friend. The pleasures of Penelope were not of the same nature as those of the Countess of Smatterton, nor was there much similarity in their pains.

There were also other considerations by which it may be accounted for, that the sympathy of her ladyship was not exactly adapted to the feelings of Penelope. The Countess was a patron, Penelope a dependent. The Countess had but the mere vanity of rank, Penelope a natural and essential pride of spirit; and it not unfrequently happens, that persons in the higher walks of society regard the rest of the world as made to be subservient to their caprices and the instruments of their will. This last consideration, however, is not altogether the fault of the higher classes; much of it, perhaps most of it, is owing to the hungry venal sycophancy of their inferiors, —but there never will be an act of parliament

passed against servility, and therefore we need not waste our time in declaiming against it, for nothing but an act of parliament can thoroughly cure it.

Penelope was not sufficiently ill to keep her apartment for any great length of time. The medical attendant thought it desirable that the patient should be amused as much as possible; the air also was recommended, and, if possible, a little change of scene. To all these suggestions prompt and immediate attention was paid. It was fortunate that the Earl of Smatterton had a residence in the immediate vicinity of London, and it was the intention of the family to spend the Christmas holidays there. It would therefore be very opportune to afford the young lady a change of air and scene: for from her childhood Penelope had never wandered beyond the two villages of Smatterton and Neverden. The proposal was made to her to accompany the family, and the proposal was

made so kindly, she could not possibly refuse it, even had it not been agreeable.

There was something perplexing to the inartificial and unsophisticated mind of Penelope Primrose, in the wonderful difference between fashionable manners under different circumstances. She had not the slightest doubt that Lord Smatterton and her ladyship were people of high fashion, nor could she have the least hesitation in concluding that the Duchess of Steeple Bumstead was also a woman of high fashion; but she recollected how rudely the Duchess had stared at her, and she had also a general feeling that many more persons of fashion at the select party had appeared, both in their manner towards her, and their deportment towards each other, absolutely disagreeable, unfeeling, and insolent. There also occurred to her recollection, amidst other thoughts of a similar nature, the impertinent and conceited airs which Lord Spoonbill had exhibited when she had formerly

met him by accident; and she compared, with some degree of astonishment, his present very agreeable with his past very disagreeable manners.

The day on which Lord Smatterton and his family removed to their suburban villa was the very day that saw Mr Primrose depart from Smatterton on his way to London. And if on this occasion we should, by way of being very sentimental and pathetic, say, “Little did they think, the one that the father was coming to town, and the other that the daughter was leaving it,”—we should be only saying what our readers might very readily conjecture to be the case without any assistance from us: but we should not be perhaps exceeding the limits of truth. For, in truth, it was a thought which actually did enter the mind of Mr Primrose just as he set out on his journey: feeling somewhat angry at the disappointment which he had experienced, he actually said to himself at the very moment that he entered the chaise: “Now I suppose,

when I get to town, Lord Smatterton and his family will be gone out of town again."

It was all very well for the medical attendant to talk about change of air and change of scene : men of science know very well that persons in a certain rank will do what they will, and so it is not amiss that they should be told how very suitable and right it is. Change of scene is pretty enough and wholesome enough for baby minds that want new playthings ; but no local changes can reach the affliction and sorrow of heart which sits brooding within. Penelope found that his lordship's suburban villa, though built in the present taste, furnished with the greatest magnificence, and situated in one of the most delightful of those ten thousand beauteous pieces of scenery which surround the metropolis, was still unable to disperse the gloom that hung upon her mind, and to reconcile her to that profession which the imperious kindness of the Countess of Smatterton had destined for her.

Lord Spoonbill took infinite pains to render the change of scene agreeable to the young lady. The weather was, for the time of year, cheerful and bright, and though cold, not intensely so : and in spite of the numerous hints which the Earl gave him of the impropriety of such excessive condescension, the heir of Smatterton would accompany the plebeian dependent in the chariot, and point out to her the various beauties of the surrounding scenery. A person who can see has a great advantage over one that is blind. Such advantage had Lord Spoonbill over Penelope Primrose. In her mind there did not exist the slightest or most distant apprehension whatever of the design which his lordship had in these attentions. Had there been such apprehension, or such suspicion, vain would have been all his lordship's endeavours to render himself agreeable to the young lady. As it was, however, Penelope certainly began to entertain a much higher opinion of his lordship's good qualities than she had before. He did

not indeed talk like a philosopher, or utter oracles, but he manifested kind feelings and generous sentiments. On many subjects he talked fluently, though his talk was commonplace; and he perhaps might adapt himself to the supposed limited information of his companion. The young lady was also pleased with the apparent indifference which in his conversation he manifested to the distinctions of rank. And as Penelope was pleased with the young nobleman's attentions, and grateful for the considerate and almost unexpected kindness which she experienced from the Smatterton family, her manner became less constrained, and, even though unwell, she was cheerful, and the gratefulness of gratitude gave to her natural beauty a charm which heightened and embellished it. Thus, the beauty by which Lord Spoonbill's attention had been first attracted, appeared to him infinitely more fascinating when connected with such mental and moral charms: so that, to use an expression which has no meaning,

but which is generally understood, his lordship had fairly lost his heart.

The day after the family had departed from town, the letter which Mr Primrose had sent to his daughter was, with several others, put into the magnificent hands of the Right Honorable the Earl of Smatterton. His lordship did everything with a grace peculiar to himself; even the opening of letters was to him a matter of importance; and his friends have often smiled at the serious and self-satisfied air with which he was accustomed to take up the letters one by one, reading aloud the address before he broke the seal. There seemed to be something pleasant to his ear in the sound of the words, "The Right Honorable the Earl of Smatterton." His lordship used generally to open his letters in the presence of his family; and as it frequently happened that, under cover to his lordship, there came letters addressed to members of his establishment, he used to make a great ceremony in reading aloud their address also.

It was curious, we have been told, to hear the different intonation with which his lordship uttered the names of his domestics from that which he used when speaking of his own great self.

On the present occasion there was only Lord Spoonbill present when the letters were opened. And when his lordship had first pompously read aloud "The Right Honorable the Earl of Smatterton," he afterwards, in a lower and quicker tone, read—"Miss Primrose." His lordship then handed the letter to his son, saying, "Charles, this letter, I perceive, is addressed to Miss Primrose; cause it immediately to be delivered to the young woman. At the same time let me give you a caution. Condescension to our inferiors is very becoming, and is one of the brightest jewels in a nobleman's coronet: but, Charles, while we condescend to our inferiors, we should always recollect, and let them also know, that they are our inferiors. We should always treat our inferiors

with kindness, and we may behave to them, when we admit them to our table, with courteous politeness. But we must not, and ought not, by way of shewing our condescension, to let down and forget our dignity."

Lord Spoonbill thought more of Miss Primrose's pretty face than he did of his own dignity, and was therefore beginning to grow weary of this right honorable prosing, and to shew symptoms of fidgettiness. But when the Earl of Smatterton had once taken it into his head to administer the word of exhortation to any of his family, he was not easily diverted from his purpose by any expressions or indications of uneasiness on the part of the patient: therefore he proceeded.

"Now, Spoonbill, let me as a friend advise you. I waive my authority and speak to you purely and simply as a friend. Our title is a mere empty sound, unless the dignity of it is properly kept up. You are disposed to be very condescending, and at home it is all well

enough ; but what I disapprove of is your condescension in public. Yesterday you accompanied this young woman in the chariot, and it is impossible to say who may have seen you thus familiarly associating with a person of inferior rank. There are too many encroachments already upon the higher classes, and we ought not to invite and encourage more. I have done.”

Lord Spoonbill was glad to hear that. But the disobedient one, as if his only object in listening to a sermon had been that he might act directly contrary to its advice, forthwith, instead of causing the letter to be delivered, did himself, with his own right honorable hands, in person present the letter to Penelope.

“ Who should write to me ? ” thought the dependent, as she received the letter with a smile of gratitude and gracefulness from the condescending son of the dignified Earl of Smatterton. Lord Spoonbill thought that Penelope had never before looked so graceful and so beautiful as at

that moment. There are some countenances in which peculiar and transient emotions light up a most fascinating expression of loveliness. This peculiarity belonged to Penelope; and that look of loveliness rewarded Lord Spoonbill for his condescension, and made a much deeper impression on his heart than the discourse of the Earl had made on his understanding. So impressive was it that it almost enchained him to the spot, so as to prevent Penelope from immediately gratifying her curiosity by perusing the letter. His lordship, as if to find reason, or to make cause for prolonging his stay, said :

“ If this letter requires an answer by return of post, my father will be happy to give you a frank ; but the post closes at three, and it is now past twelve.”

“ I thank you, my lord,” replied the young lady, looking at the letter and half opening it ; “ I do not know from whence it comes.”

In a few seconds the letter was opened, and the quick glancing eye of Penelope saw the

name of Primrose, and the whole truth rushed into her mind with overpowering violence; and the intense feeling of delight at the thought of being saved from dependence and rescued from a dreaded profession, was too much for her weakened spirits to bear composedly, and exclaiming, with hysteric shriek, "My father, my father!" she would have sunk on the floor had not Lord Spoonbill caught her in his arms and placed her on a sofa. His lordship rang violently for assistance, which was promptly and successfully rendered; and as his presence was no farther necessary, he thought it best to inform the Countess of the situation of Miss Primrose, and of the event which had produced this sudden burst of feeling.

Now, generally speaking, the Countess of Smatterton was a lady of great humanity and considerateness; but when anything occurred to interfere with or interrupt a favourite scheme, her natural tenderness was much abated. It presently came into her mind that the arrival of

Mr Primrose in England would prevent the proposed exhibition of Penelope's musical talents, and this thought afflicted her and made her almost angry. Nevertheless, her ladyship immediately went to Miss Primrose and offered her congratulations on the happy event. These congratulations the young lady, in the simplicity of her heart, believed to be sincere, and she made her acknowledgments accordingly; but she was very much surprised at the manner in which the Countess received these acknowledgments.

Penelope, when left alone, read over her father's letter with more composed and settled delight, and it was an unspeakable relief to her mind that now, from the language of this communication, she had reason to be satisfied that there was no danger that she should be urged into that dreaded publicity from which she had so timidly but so vainly shrunk. This letter produced a much more powerful and healing effect than any change of air or

variation of scenery could accomplish. Now was she full of joy and full of hope, and almost forgot the tears she had shed for her uncle, and the sighs she had heaved for her lover.

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